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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION OF THE FIFTY-THIRD PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-THIRD YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2004–05

COMPRISING PERIOD
24 January—10 February 2005

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24 January 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 24 January 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning for Mixed Communities

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): Government policy is to create sustainable communities that contain a well-integrated mix of decent housing of different types and tenures to support a wide range of households of different sizes, ages and incomes. Planning has an important role to play through the provision of an appropriate mix of housing which addresses the needs of households, including in terms of how much they can afford to pay for housing.

In July 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued for consultation "Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing" which proposed changes to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) in relation to its approach to planning for affordable housing and mix of housing.

Part of this consultation document related to rural areas. In a separate statement to the House today, I have announced the publication of the final update to PPG3 entitled "Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas" which deals with the provision of affordable housing in rural areas.

Following extensive consultation discussions about "Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing", it became clear that there was no consensus among practitioners about how best to plan to achieve an appropriate mix of housing in an area. Some practitioners have advocated an approach by which local planning authorities make provision in their local development documents for a specified mix based on the size and type of housing. Others feel that this approach would be too prescriptive, particularly when applied to specific sites, where they feel account needs to be taken of the particular circumstances of each site and the housing market at the time a planning application is made.

In the light of the consultation and post-consultation discussions, we have developed further the approach to planning for a mix of housing. The revised approach is reflected in the consultation document "Planning for Mixed Communities". This is being published today by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and copies are available in the Libraries of both Houses. The consultation document incorporates draft policy for planning for affordable housing and for a mix of housing.

The proposed approach on mix, in relation to market housing, focuses on household types, and recognises that planning for households requires local planning authorities to take account of market considerations and to provide for a degree of choice. It is proposed that local planning authorities should plan for the range of different households to be provided for over the plan period and not for a range of housing sizes and types based on floorspace or room numbers.

The proposed approach on mix, in relation to affordable housing, is that the approach to planning for an appropriate mix of affordable housing should continue to be based on the size and type of housing. This appears to be generally supported by local planning authorities and housing providers.

The wider approach to planning for affordable housing in this consultation update has been redrafted in the light of the previous consultation exercise. The changes are primarily to improve clarity in the operation and scope of the policy, particularly where there is explicit flexibility, such as in the approach to site-size thresholds above which affordable housing is to be sought. The policy objectives remain the same, namely to increase the amount of affordable housing where it is needed, in the context of delivering agreed housing numbers. The proposals include: a requirement that all local planning authorities should have an affordable housing policy; a stronger regional role, including co-ordinating the preparation of local housing assessments; the lowering of site size thresholds above which affordable housing is to be sought; and the requirement that local planning authorities balance the need for affordable housing against the likely development potential of sites.

A key objective of the policy is to create mixed and inclusive communities that offer a wide range of housing and promote social inclusion. To do this local planning authority policy must be based on a robust evidence base. A key component of the evidence base is the preparation of a local housing assessment. The consultation update emphasises to local planning authorities the importance of keeping the assessment up-to-date and developing the assessment in collaboration with key stakeholders, including housebuilders, who understand and have to take account of housing markets.

The final policy will be accompanied by practice guidance on carrying out local housing assessments and on planning for mixed communities. A key objective of the practice guidance will be to set out clearly the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders in the planning for housing process. The guidance is currently in preparation. The intention is to involve stakeholder representative bodies in developing and finalising this guidance.

The proposed policy changes would replace paragraphs 9 to 17 of PPG3. Annex C would be updated with new definitions, and Annex D would be updated with the details of new practice guidance and relevant ODPM Circulars. DETR Circular 6/98 (Planning and Affordable Housing) would be cancelled.

This consultation update addresses the demand-side aspects of planning for housing. Later this year, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will consult on proposed changes to the way in which the planning system allocates and releases land for housing in response to market signals. The supply-side update to PPG3 will take forward the Government's response (with respect to PPG3) to the recommendations in the Barker review of housing supply.

Planning for Housing

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): This statement concerns the planning system's role in providing sufficient homes to meet the variety of housing needs in England. The intention is to remove barriers to delivering the housing needed in our communities and ensure the planning system is not a brake on an adequate and continuing supply of sites for housing in sustainable locations.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing today two updates to planning policy guidance note 3: housing (PPG3), entitled "Supporting the Delivery of New Housing" and "Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas". Both updates will help to increase the supply of housing where it is needed in the most sustainable way possible. They reflect the changes to the planning system made in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

These updates were the subject of consultation in July 2003. The remainder of the PPG3 update "Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing", of which "Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas" was a component, is being further consulted upon. I am making a separate statement on this today.

Supporting the Delivery of New Housing

PPG3 requires local planning authorities, when preparing their local development frameworks, to review all their non-housing allocations and to consider whether some of this land might be better used for housing or mixed use development. The Government's experience is that nevertheless many local planning authorities continue to reserve an excess supply of land when it would make sense to consider this for housing.

The consultation update proposed an approach to the handling of applications for housing and mixed use development on land allocated or previously used for industrial or commercial use which is no longer needed for that use, and which is both suitable for and needed for housing. The Government have considered the responses to the consultation and are adding today the following new paragraph 42 *(a)* to PPG3:

> "Local planning authorities should consider favourably planning applications for housing or mixed use developments which concern land allocated for industrial or commercial use in saved policies and development plan documents or redundant land or buildings in industrial or commercial use, but which is no longer needed for such use, unless any of the following apply:
>
> the proposal fails to reflect the policies in this PPG (including paragraph 31), particularly those relating to a site's suitability for development and the presumption that previously-developed sites (or buildings for re-use or conversion) should be developed before greenfield sites;
>
> the housing development would undermine the planning for housing strategy set out in the regional spatial strategy or the development plan document where this is up-to-date, in particular if it would lead to over-provision of new housing and this would exacerbate the problems of, or lead to, low demand;
>
> it can be demonstrated, preferably through an up-to-date review of employment land[1] (refer to annex D for practice guidance), that there is a realistic prospect of the allocation being taken up for its stated use in the plan period or that its development for housing would undermine regional and local strategies for economic development and regeneration."
>
> [1] 'Employment Land Reviews: Guidance Note' ODPM 2004'

In December 2004, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published practice guidance for local planning authorities on carrying out employment land reviews to assess the demand for and supply of land for employment. The guidance aims to help local planning authorities assess the suitability of sites for employment development, safeguard the best sites for employment and identify those which are no longer suitable for employment development and which should be made available for other uses. A copy of the practice guidance is available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Areas

The consultation PPG3 update "Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing" proposed to replace the rural exception policy with an allocation policy, which would enable local planning authorities to allocate sites solely for affordable housing. In the light of the consultation responses a revised approach has been developed, aimed at meeting concerns expressed about the practical effects of the proposed approach. The Government are today amending PPG3 policy, adding a new section which will enable local planning authorities to allocate sites in rural areas, but also to take advantage of windfall sites through a continuing rural exception approach. The intention to retain the rural exception policy alongside a new allocation policy was signalled by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she published her Department's five year strategy "Delivering the Essentials of Life" on 8 December 2004.

The replacement paragraph 18 of PPG3 is as follows:

> "It is important that there is adequate housing provision in rural areas to meet the needs of local people and to contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities. Regional spatial strategies should set out how planning at the local level is expected to contribute to meeting identified rural affordable housing needs (including Gypsies and Travellers where relevant). Local planning authorities should make sufficient land available either within or adjoining existing rural communities to enable these local requirements to be met in a manner which contributes to the achievement of sustainable communities. Affordable housing provision in rural areas should be supported by a rural exception site policy (see annex B). Rural exception sites should be small, solely for affordable housing and on land within or adjoining existing small rural communities[1] which would not otherwise be released for general market housing. The affordable housing provided on such sites should meet local needs[2] in perpetuity and count towards the overall level of housing provision. The rural exception site policy applies to both allocated or windfall sites."

An addition to paragraph 36 of PPG3 is highlighted below:

> Authorities should make specific allowances for all the different types of windfalls in their plans. Allowance should be made on the basis of examining past trends in windfalls coming forward for development and on the likely future windfall potential as assessed in a capacity study. No allowance should be made for greenfield windfalls (except for rural exception sites, see annex B and refer to annex D for good practice advice on capacity studies).
>
> [1] Small rural settlements have been designated for enfranchisement and right to acquire purposes (under section 17 of the Housing Act 1996) by S.I. 1997/620—625 inclusive and 1999/1307.
>
> [2] Should be set out in the local development document and can include key or essential workers and those with a family connection.

The replacement annex B of PPG3 is as follows:

Annex B: Rural exception sites

1. All local planning authorities that include rural areas should include a rural exception site policy in the relevant development plan document. A rural exception site policy enables the authority to allocate or release small sites within and adjoining existing small rural communities[1], which may be subject to policies of restraint, such as Green Belt, and which would not otherwise be released for housing, but only in order to provide affordable housing to meet local needs[2] in perpetuity.
2. In preparing local development documents, local planning authorities should take account of their local housing assessment and should consider the benefits of preparing village appraisals, which encompass assessments of housing, economic and environmental profiles of rural communities. In doing so, they should work closely with their local communities, landowners and housing providers to prepare strategies for implementing exception schemes, including identifying possible sites. Based on these assessments, the local planning authority should set out:

   what the local planning authority considers to be 'affordable' housing for the purpose of the rural exception site policy in the context of its local housing assessment or other appraisal; and

   the area within which needs will be considered 'local', for example, in terms of market towns, groups of villages or parishes, or even a single parish. In some areas it may be possible to name particular settlements where there is evidence of need and where opportunities for affordable housing on rural exception sites will be explored.
3. Development plan documents may allocate sites solely for affordable housing andshould set out the criteria against which windfall sites will be considered.
4. Rural exception sites are not appropriate for general market housing or market housing for local needs only. It is unacceptable to include clauses in planning obligations which would enable lenders of private finance to dispose of property on the open market as a last resort if a borrower were to get into financial difficulties. Such clauses should also be unnecessary in the case of loans to registered social landlords, in part, because of the safeguards to private lenders offered by the Housing Act 1996. Planning obligations should be used to set out a cascade mechanism[3] that will ensure that occupiers are always found for affordable housing provided on rural exception sites.

[1] Small rural settlements have been designated for enfranchisement and right to acquire purposes (under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1996) by S.I. 1997/620—625 inclusive and 1999/1307.

[2] Should be set out in the local development document and can include key or essential workers and those with a family connection.

[3] A mechanism which sets out the procedure to be followed to secure an occupant for affordable housing on rural exception sites, when such housing is vacated. This might set out the geographical areas or types of households that would be eligible for such housing.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Tsunami Victims (Death Registration)

The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Douglas Alexander): As we have made clear before, it is a priority for the Government to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to support the families of people missing following the tsunami. We are conscious that, despite the efforts of the local authorities in the countries affected and the on-going work of my officials and the police both here and in the region, many bodies may never be recovered. This would cause unacceptable uncertainty for the families concerned.

We have therefore agreed, as a response to the exceptional circumstances we face, that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will register the death overseas and issue a certified copy of the register entry for missing British nationals where no body has been found. This will be done at the request of the family, and based on advice from the police, and will be provided free of charge.

We have agreed with the police, who are investigating all reports of missing British nationals, that they will provide my officials with advice as their inquiries conclude as to whether the missing person was in fact killed by the tsunami. We will then decide, in the light of the evidence, whether to register the death. In order to arrive at the judgment, we and the police will be applying four criteria, all of which must be met:

(i) That evidence exists beyond reasonable doubt that the missing person had travelled to the affected region (eg that they had booked, paid for and made a journey to the region); and

(ii) that on the balance of probability, the person was in the affected area at the time the tsunami struck; and

(iii) there was no reasonable evidence of life since 26 December (eg contact with relatives or transactions on their bank account); and

(iv) that there was no reason, again on the balance of probability, that the person would want to disappear.

These inquiries will inevitably take time to complete, although the police are confident that they will be able to complete the overwhelming majority of investigations for those people most likely to have been caught up in the tsunami within twelve months—in many cases, much sooner.

Throughout this difficult period the police will continue to make family liaison officers available to support the families of those thought highly likely to have been involved in the tsunami. The family liaison officers will ensure that they are kept fully informed during what we recognise is likely to be a harrowing process. They will also help them gain access to emotional care and other advice and welfare services, including any financial assistance available to them through the state benefit system.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Technical Lifer Status

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): From 2 April 2005, life sentence prisoners who have been transferred to psychiatric hospital for treatment will no longer be considered for technical lifer status. All life sentence prisoners will have their future release determined by the Parole Board and be subject to life licence on release. This decision has been taken in light of the judgment in the case of Benjamin and Wilson v the United Kingdom, which found that technical lifer policy was in breach of article 5(4) of the European convention on human rights. This will not affect those who have already been granted technical lifer status, or the consideration of any pending applications. No new applications, however, will be considered after 2 April 2005.

Criminal Justice Act (Sentencing Provisions)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): On 4 April 2005 the majority of the new sentences introduced in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will come into force. The key provisions are: public protection sentences for dangerous offenders; the new community order; custody minus; and the new release and recall arrangements for all custodial sentences of 12 months and over.

These new sentences are a key part of the Government's tough and effective sentencing framework which targets resources where they are needed. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 is the most significant piece of legislation in this area for over a decade. It introduces wide changes to sentencing principles and the sentencing powers of the courts.

The public must be protected from dangerous criminals. That is why the Criminal Justice Act created new public protection sentences aimed specifically at sexual and violent offenders. Offenders convicted of specific sexual and violent offences will be assessed by the court as to whether or not they pose a serious risk to the public. Those who are considered to be such a risk will be subject to the provisions for dangerous offenders.

These new sentences will ensure that dangerous sexual and violent offenders are subject to assessment by the Parole Board. They will not be released from prison until and unless their level of risk to the public is assessed by the Parole Board as manageable in the community. If the risk is not reduced to a safe level, they may never be released.

For other sentences of 12 months and over, if prisoners have not been classed as dangerous by the courts, they will be released into the community under licence conditions halfway through their sentence but supervision in the community will continue to the end of the entire sentence, rather than to the three quarters point as now. Recalls to prison following breach of licence conditions will take place under the new scheme outlined in the Act and will no longer need to be authorised by the Parole Board.

The new community order will allow sentencers a much greater degree of flexibility in putting together tough community sentences that will be tailored to the needs of offenders and the seriousness of their offence. The full range of community punishments will be available for all offenders whose offence is serious enough to merit them and not just for imprisonable offences as is the case now. Powers to deal with offenders who breach are also stronger: courts will have the option of making the requirements more onerous, revoking the order and re-sentencing the offender, or if the breach is wilful and persistent, imposing a custodial sentence even if the original offence was not imprisonable.

Custody minus is a new suspended sentence, which allows the court to impose community requirements together with a suspended custodial sentence which is activated if the offender breaches the community period. This new suspended sentence will be much more demanding than current suspended sentences. Not only will an offender be required to refrain from committing another offence during the period of suspension; he or she will have requirements to fulfil in the community, as with a community sentence.

Offenders can be brought back to court during a custody minus sentence, for a review hearing. The new power of review will allow sentencers to play a more active role in determining what is needed, not just at the point of sentence but also during its course. As the review process for the drug treatment and testing order has shown, better information about the outcome of their decisions will improve sentencers' decision making, as well as benefit the offender's rehabilitation

The new sentencing framework will help to cut crime through effective punishment; protection of the public; reparation to communities; and the prevention of re-offending.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 25 January 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Investment Strategy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is today publishing its departmental investment strategy, which sets out the proposed capital and resource investment expenditure between 2005–06 and 2007–08. It also summarises the assets the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister holds and the processes by which investment decisions are made.

Copies of the document will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses and are available on the ODPM website.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Government Decontamination Service (GDS)

The Minister for the Environment and Agri-environment (Mr. Elliot Morley): The Government announced on 25 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 55WS that they were actively considering establishing a UK-wide service to provide advice and assistance in decontamination and clean up after a deliberate chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) incident or a major accidental release of hazardous materials. Work on the potential costs, benefits and modalities of such a service has been going on since that announcement.

As a result of their considerations, the Government now intend to set up a Government decontamination service (GDS), as an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The decision is part of the cross-Government work to ensure that the UK is prepared for a range of emergencies and has been developed under the CBRN resilience programme led by the Home Office. The service will have three principal functions, aimed at streamlining our ability to decontaminate the built and open environment following any CBRN incident.

First, it will provide advice and guidance to responsible authorities during their contingency planning for CBRN incidents, and regularly help test the arrangements that are in place. This will build on the strategic national guidance for the built and open environment which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and DEFRA (respectively) issued in 2004.

Secondly, it will rigorously assess the ability of companies in the private sector to carry out decontamination operations, and ensure that responsible authorities have access to those services if the need arises. If required, the agency will also help co-ordinate decontamination operations.

Finally, the service will advise central Government on the national capability for the decontamination of buildings and the environment in the event of a major release of chemical, biological or radioactive materials.

The Government have in parallel been taking forward work to build on their existing capability to decontaminate buildings and the open environment. The work has included assessment of and engagement with a range of specialist contractors and the identification of appropriate technologies. This is part of the research and foundation being developed to further enhance capability and build the permanent decontamination service over the coming years.

CBRN resilience is devolved in Scotland. Scottish Ministers decided that the GDS should be invited to provide a service in Scotland and the Scottish Executive has been actively involved in its establishment. A similar statement is therefore to be made in the Scottish Parliament.

The Welsh Assembly Government are not responsible for CBRN resilience under the terms of the devolved settlement in Wales but has been fully consulted on the development of the GDS. The central GDS arrangements now being put into place by the UK Government will also cover Wales and the Welsh Assembly Government fully support these arrangements.

PRIME MINISTER

House of Lords (Appointments)

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The House of Lords Appointments Commission is responsible for recommending non-party-political appointments to the House of Lords. However, I continue to nominate direct to Her Majesty the Queen a limited number of distinguished public servants on retirement. I have decided that the number of appointments covered under this arrangement will not exceed 10 in any one Parliament.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Directors' Remuneration Report Regulations 2002

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): As announced in my written parliamentary statement on 25 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 51–52WS, my Department commissioned a report on compliance with the Directors' Remuneration Report Regulations 2002 ("the Regulations") during the course of this year's AGM season, including an assessment of changes in remuneration practices. Deloitte and Touche LLP were appointed to carry out the work following a competitive tender process. Their report is today being placed on the DTI website at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/cld/Deloitte_Rep_DRRR_2004.pdf and in the Libraries of both Houses.

The report underlines the positive impact of the regulations and the effectiveness of the Government's action in subjecting directors remuneration to closer scrutiny by shareholders. It reveals high levels of company compliance with the regulations, better clarity of disclosure on remuneration, improved communication between companies and their shareholders, and changes in companies' remuneration policies and practices improving the link between pay and performance. It also suggests that further legislation in this area is neither necessary nor desirable and that further improvements to disclosure and the linkage between pay and performance are best pursued through the development and implementation of best practice guidelines.

In the circumstances, whilst I will continue to keep the position under review, I have concluded that further changes to company law requirements in this area are not needed at this stage.

The report does suggest some minor changes to the regulations in order to clarify what is required and improve transparency and the quality of the information provided. My Department will be considering the need for these changes in the light of views expressed by stakeholders and better regulation principles. If, as a result, we consider that changes are made, these should not involve additional costs or additional regulatory burdens on companies of shareholders.

In my February statement, I welcomed the action taken by the Association of British Insurers and National Association of Pension Funds, and by the Confederation of British Industry, in producing guidance on directors' contracts. The report provides a basis for the further development of this guidance. I now call on these groups to work towards providing a common set of guidelines by the end of the year.

While the report is encouraging, there is no room for complacency. The challenge for remuneration committees and their advisors remains to produce rewards packages which tie pay and performance targets to the creation of long term value for shareholders and are transparent to shareholders. Shareholders, for their part, should satisfy themselves that remuneration arrangements for directors are in the best interests of the company. They must also be vigilant and ensure that situations where directors enjoy rich rewards whilst companies perform poorly and shareholders and employees suffer are challenged.

Regional State Aid Reform

The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Douglas Alexander): On 14 June 2004, *Official Report*, columns 19–20WS, my right hon. Friend the Minister for Industry and the Regions, announced that the European Commission had published proposals for amending the guidelines that govern regional state aid, which define assisted areas and aid intensities allowed within them, for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013, and that her Department would shortly be issuing a consultation document seeking the views of all interested parties on the Commission's proposals.

My Department today published the results of that consultation exercise and copies of the summary of responses, and the Government's latest letter to the Commission, have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The Commission issued a further paper on its approach before Christmas, and is to hold a first joint meeting with national officials on 1 and 2 February: it then plans to issue detailed proposals in May, for adoption in September this year. The Commission's further paper is available on its website and my Department has written to consultees drawing their attention to it.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pension Service Partnership Fund

The Minister for Pensions (Malcolm Wicks): Today we are announcing a unique scheme to enhance and build on our working relationships with the Government's partners in the voluntary and community sector, including local authorities.

The Pension Service Partnership Fund of £13 million will provide up to two years' funding to partners to undertake mainly local initiatives which will improve the take-up of older people's benefits, particularly by hard to reach groups. The aims of the fund were developed in consultation with members of the DWP Partnerships Against Poverty Group, a joint forum which includes national representatives from organisations such as Help the Aged, Age Concern and the Local Government Association.

It is being administered under our Link-Age Programme which aims to integrate joint working between partners so that older people are provided with a more cohesive front-line service.

There have been around 170 Partnership Fund contracts awarded to organisations throughout England, Wales and Scotland. Many of the schemes are expected to begin their work early this year. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has contributed towards the funding and is sponsoring initiatives that target areas of rural deprivation in England.

A full list of the successful applicants has been placed in the Library.

We will be monitoring the schemes closely in order to evaluate successful methods and identify innovative approaches. Subsequently we will publish details in a best practice guide aimed at the community and welfare rights audience.

Incapacity Benefit

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): In his pre-Budget report of 2 December, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced our intention to expand the pathways to work service to cover the Jobcentre Plus districts covering all 30 local authority districts with the greatest proportions of working age population on incapacity benefits (IB). I would like to provide an update on work to take this forward.

The seven pathways to work pilots are designed to test the new approach in a variety of labour markets, including where IB recipiency rates are high. This means that we are already offering work-focused support from skilled personal advisers and the range of provision and incentives available in the choices package in five of the 30 local authority districts. These are Bridgend, Burnley, Gateshead, Inverclyde and Rhondda, Cynon, Taff. Early findings are showing very promising results.

The reason the pathways pilots are performing well is due to the hard work and commitment from all the Jobcentre Plus staff and the NHS and private and voluntary sector organisations working with them. The expansion will make full use of their experience, expertise and the lessons learnt to ensure the smooth introduction of pathways in the new Jobcentre Plus districts, many of which are already working innovatively with people on IB. We are therefore putting in place twinning arrangements between current and future districts to ensure this learning and good practice is shared at all levels.

The new condition management programmes are a totally new concept in combining health and employment interventions to help customers to manage their health and consider work. They are a good example of the successful partnership working between Jobcentre Plus and the Department of Health, devolved administrations and local primary care trusts/health boards. We are continuing to work with medical experts and local representatives to develop equally high quality programmes for the new pathways districts.

We will start to roll out the pathways service from the end of October 2005 onwards and when all the new programmes are in place it will mean the pathways approach will be operating in one third of the country and cover around 900,00 IB recipients. I know that there is a lot of work to be done to introduce an effective work focused interview regime and ensure high quality provision is available.

The new pathways areas will be rolled out according to the following schedule:

Phase 1—October 2005	*Phase 2—April 2006*	*Phase 3—October 2006*
Cumbria	Barnsley, Rotherham and Doncaster	Eastern Valleys
Glasgow	City of Sunderland	Greater Mersey
Lancashire West	County Durham	Staffordshire
Tees Valley	Lanarkshire and East Dumbarton	
	Liverpool and the Wirral	
	Manchester and Salford	
	Swansea and West Wales	

This major expansion of pathways is designed to test a mandatory work focused interview regime and the choices package provision in all those areas with high levels of inactivity and IB recipiency rates. By extending the number of people who receive advice and support from skilled personal advisers we aim to ensure as many people as possible starting a claim for IB are able to fulfil their aspiration for a return to employment and also to reduce the numbers at risk of long term inactivity and benefit dependency, with the damaging social and economic impact that chronic ill health and inactivity has on them and the locality they live in.

Alongside the decision to extend the current pilots to some existing IB customers, expanding the areas in the country operating pathways is the first major step in reforming IB and focusing customers on their remaining capabilities and encouraging them back to work.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 26 January 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Regulatory Impact Assessment Process

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): An updated measurement of the level of compliance with the regulatory impact assessment process is today being placed on the website of the Cabinet Office regulatory impact unit. An exercise in November 2004 to establish a snapshot of the level of compliance, based on consultations carried out in the three months to 16 November 2004, showed a compliance rate of 100 per cent. We will continue to keep this under regular review and will report back to Parliament as appropriate.

DEFENCE

Reservists

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): On the 22 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 62WS, I announced to the House the publication of a consultation document entitled "Safeguards for Reservists and their Employers: Proposed Amendments to the Schemes for Financial Assistance Awards for Reservists and their Employers" setting out our proposals to update the financial assistance arrangements for reservists who are called-out for permanent service. This received a wide circulation and copies were placed in the Library of the House. Altogether 4,156 visits were recorded to the website including the consultation document before the consultation period closed on 15 October 2004. Some 139 responses were recorded to the online survey and a further 66 individuals responded to the consultation by separate e-mail or by post, while 922 people downloaded the consultation document. An analysis of the responses is available on the MOD website at http://www.financialassistance.mod.uk/files/pdf/Consultation_Results_Report.pdf.

It is clear from the responses received that our proposals will meet the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of those who responded to the consultation. I am therefore today publishing the regulatory impact assessment (RIA). This outlines the impact our proposals would have on reservists and employers. The document will receive a similar circulation to the original consultation and copies will be placed in the Library of the House. The RIA will also be available electronically both on the consultations section of the main Ministry of Defence website at: http://www.mod.uk/consultations/consultations.htm and on the SaBRE website accessible from their front-page at: http://www.sabre.mod.uk/.

We are inviting comments on the RIA over the next four weeks, with the consultation period ending on 22 February. Subject to any responses, I anticipate being able to introduce the replacement regulations in March 2005.

Northern Ireland

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): As part of our normal process of keeping force levels under review, the GOC Northern Ireland, in consultation with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, has concluded that one of his GB-based battalions can be removed from his command as it is not required for routine support to the police in Northern Ireland. Accordingly, the battalion known as Mainland Battalion 1 (MLD 1), the companies of which have not been routinely based in the Province, can be removed from the command of the GOC NI to CinC LAND on 26 January 2005.

This is a prudent measure to provide military support to the police efficiently and does not affect the army's ability to support the PSNI in countering the threat from terrorism and preventing potential public disorder. We will keep force levels in Northern Ireland under regular review to match the support required by the PSNI.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Constitution

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I am making available today a commentary on the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. This commentary will be available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House. It will be published as a Command Paper in advance of Second Reading of the EU Bill. Copies of the Command Paper will be distributed to the media and key opinion formers, including academics, think tanks and business organisations. It will be available on the FCO website http://www.europe.gov.uk and will be distributed to central libraries across the UK.

The Government have already published a White Paper on the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe (Cm 6309) and a guide to the EU which, as well as providing general information about the EU, also explains in general terms what the constitutional treaty is about. This commentary has been produced to meet the Government's further commitment to Parliament, originally to the Lords European Scrutiny Committee to produce "an analysis of the draft treaty against existing treaty provisions". This commitment was reiterated by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 4 May 2004 when he agreed that "the Government will publish a range of material to accompany the constitutional treaty including a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the existing treaties and the new constitutional treaty", 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column1456W. The commentary, in analysing every article of the draft treaty, explains what each article does where this is not obvious from the text, explains where the treaty provision derives from if it is not new, and sets out where legislative procedures have changed.

The EU constitutional treaty is complex. It has to be, because it is not a law for governing a superstate, but a carefully drafted treaty regulating in detail the relations between European nations in a variety of areas. The treaty is also long. It consists of a preamble, 448 articles arranged in four parts, 36 protocols and two annexes and the 50 declarations, which were included in the official record of the signature ceremony. Much of it is a replication of the existing treaties.

The most important provisions of the treaty are all contained within the 60 short articles of part one. These make it clearer than ever before that the EU is a union of sovereign states, which can only exercise those powers given to it by its members. part two consists of the charter of fundamental rights. Part three explains what the union seeks to achieve in the various policy areas in which powers are conferred on it and what the limits on its powers are. It also sets out the detailed legislative procedures for exercising these powers, much of which is taken verbatim from existing treaties. Part four sets out technical and supplementary provisions. It also sets out how the treaty may be amended, how it is to be ratified and when it will come into force.

If the new treaty is approved by all the member states and comes into force, it will replace all the old EU treaties (apart from the Euratom treaty) thus simplifying the legal framework of the union and the communities.

The commentary on the treaty is designed to guide the reader through the treaty and explain its significance. It is in two parts. Part one acts as a general introduction and part two analyses each article of the treaty.

The introduction explains how the EU treaties have evolved over the last 50 years from the Economic Coal and Steel Community (1951) to the draft constitutional treaty. It sets out what the new constitutional treaty does and what it contains. The introduction also includes:

> a section on the charter of fundamental rights, explaining the origins and significance of the charter;
>
> guidance on how to read the treaty and use the accompanying analysis;
>
> an appendix setting out the development of the competences of the European Union from the treaty of Rome to the constitutional treaty.

Part two of the commentary provides an article by article analysis of the constitutional treaty, following its structure and layout. Part two contains an annex, which sets out the areas in the new treaty which have moved to either qualified majority voting (QMV) or to co-decision or both. This annex updates and supplements the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister for Europe on 5 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 593W, in order, inter alia, to take account of the procedural changes since that date in the existing treaty provisions. A list of abbreviations and a glossary of key terms used throughout the commentary is also provided.

This constitutional treaty can only come into force once it has been ratified in accordance with the constitutional arrangements of each member state. In the UK, this will require primary legislation amending the European Communities Act 1972 and then endorsement in a referendum.

The Government believe that the commentary demonstrates the merit of reorganising the existing treaties into a single coherent document. It also shows clearly how little of the new constitutional treaty is in fact new—the bulk of its provisions are derived directly from and closely follow provisions in the existing treaties.

I hope that this commentary will help inform debate and discussion during the passage of the EU Bill.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Interception of Communications

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am announcing today the Government's conclusions on the review on the evidential use of intercept material in criminal proceedings. This accompanies the announcement I intend making on counter-terrorism legislation following the House of Lord's ruling on the use of Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001, Part 4 powers.

My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister commissioned the review in July 2003. Its remit was to examine the benefits and risks of using intercept as evidence to secure more convictions of organised criminals and terrorists. In doing so, the review was tasked with considering how a legal model, providing for the use of interception for evidential purposes, could be deployed in a way which is compatible with the ECHR, addresses the practical concerns of the intercepting agencies and takes account of developments in communications technology.

The review, which was the most thorough and far-reaching of five reviews on the subject in the last 10 years, reported last summer. It concluded that evidential use of intercept would be likely to help secure a modest increase in convictions of some serious criminals but not terrorists. The preferred legal model for evidential use of intercept would comprise three types of interception warrant—intelligence only, non-evidential and evidential, the latter requiring authorisation by a judge. Intelligence only and non-evidential warrants would continue to be authorised by the Secretary of State and would provide criteria-based protections against disclosure in court of the most sensitive interception capabilities and techniques. Set against the benefits that this approach might deliver, the review identified a number of serious risks that evidential use of intercept would entail for the intercepting agencies and their present capabilities in fighting serious crime and terrorism.

The review did not make agreed recommendations for or against lifting the prohibition on evidential use of intercept but invited Ministers to consider, in the light of the evidence presented on the balance of benefits and risks, whether or not to do so. Further work on what might be done to mitigate the risks identified in the review report was completed shortly before Christmas. This showed that there was no immediate prospect of removing the main risks, partly because of the difficulty of assessing the impact of major changes expected in communications technologies over the next few years.

The Government have from the outset made it clear that we would change the law on evidential use of intercept only if we could be satisfied that the benefits of doing so clearly outweigh the risks. We have therefore concluded that it would not be right to legislate now to remove the existing prohibition. We will continue to keep these issues under review.

The review report is a classified document which cannot be published in the ordinary way. It will however be made available to the Intelligence and Security Committee to which I will give further evidence if requested to do so. A summary of the report's main findings is set out below:

> there is no easy or risk free way of keeping what our "intelligence only" approach—with its uniquely close working relationships between law enforcement and intelligence agencies—delivers now and adding to this the benefits that evidential use of intercept could deliver. Evidential regimes in other countries provide useful pointers on the latter but are of little help on the first point;
>
> the ideal of allowing intercepting agencies unfettered freedom to choose when to go evidential is not an option as it would be open to "cherry picking" and therefore fails to meet the requirements of ensuring fairness in criminal proceedings;
>
> evidential use of intercept would be likely to help convict some serious criminals;
>
> intercept evidence would be unlikely to assist in prosecuting terrorist targets and would not have made a critical difference in supporting criminal prosecution of those detained under ATCSA (Part 4) powers;
>
> a legal model providing for three types of interception warrant—intelligence only, non-evidential, and evidential—appears to offer the best basis for evidential use of intercept. Substantial further work would be needed on the details of the legal model before it could be introduced. Major changes expected in communications technologies over the next few years mean that the model potentially has only a very short shelf-life.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Girls' Education

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am today placing in the Libraries of both Houses copies of "Girls' Education: Towards a Better Future for All", published today by the Department for International Development (DFID).

At the turn of the millennium, the international community promised that by 2005, there would be as many girls as boys in school. Despite this promise, there are still 58 million girls worldwide who are not in school. The majority of these girls live in sub-Saharan Africa and south and west Asia. A girl growing up in a poor family in sub-Saharan Africa has less than a one-in-four chance of getting a secondary education. The millennium development goal (MDG) to get as many girls as boys into primary and secondary school by 2005 is likely to be missed in over 75 countries. Later this year, when leaders from around the world come together to take stock of the MDGs, there will be no escaping the fact that we have collectively failed to keep our promise.

The paper reminds us of the value of education for lifting people out of poverty and enabling them to build a more promising future for themselves, their families and their nations. Nothing has as much impact on a child's future well being as their mother's level of education. Educating girls helps to make communities and societies healthier, wealthier and safer. It helps to reduce child death, improve maternal health and tackle the spread of HIV and AIDS. Girls' education underpins the ability to achieve all the other MDGs, which is why the timetable was set as 2005.

This strategy is a first step to get us back on track and it acknowledges that we all need to do substantially more to help girls get into school. To this end, we plan to spend at least £1.4 billion on education in the developing world over the next three years. This money will provide additional support to Governments in developing countries to produce plans that prioritise girls' education. This will include providing financial help to those wanting to remove school fees and indirect costs of educating girls. The money will also be used to provide more resources to strengthen international efforts to coordinate action on girls' education. We will also use the UK's 2005 Presidencies of the G8 and EU and our role as co-chair of the fast-track initiative (FTI) to push gender equality in education up the political agenda and make it a priority for the international community.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Office Support Services

The Minister for Work (Jane Kennedy): The Department for Work and Pensions has been reviewing existing support services to ensure that they offer best value for money and continue to meet our changing business needs.

These office support services, which include post opening and despatch, messengerial work, switchboard operations, typing and secretarial services, are currently delivered through a range of external suppliers and in-house teams as well as forming part of the tasks of staff who serve the public directly. These arrangements have served us well in the past, but the review has concluded that current methods of delivery do not now provide best value for money and that, in their current state, would not provide the best service in the future.

The Department's executive team, with my full support, has decided that bids for the future provision of all our office support services should be invited from specialist external suppliers in the private sector. This should bring operational benefits and value for money by moving, as far as possible, to a single organisation to manage these range of activities for us. A specialist supplier would bring the benefits of new technology as well as organisational efficiencies to the provision of these services and will offer the agility to respond to our changing needs as the Department is modernised and transformed.

The appointment of a provider will be determined through a competitive tendering exercise starting shortly, with new arrangements expected to commence in late 2006.

This decision will mean that some jobs currently undertaken by DWP staff are likely to transfer to an external contractor. The number of posts likely to be affected equates to less than 1 per cent. of the DWP workforce. We recognise that some staff may not wish to transfer and for these we will, where possible, offer the opportunity to re-deploy within DWP or other Government Departments although we cannot guarantee this.

Senior managers have already met with trade union representatives to outline our plans for the future delivery of these services and will continue to do so as the work continues.

Disabled People (Equality)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Maria Eagle): The consultation document "Delivering Equality for Disabled People" (Cm 6255) was published on 21 July 2004, and consultation continued until 23 October. The Government have now completed their analysis of the responses, and I am pleased to place draft regulations in the Library today that have been informed by the consultation process. An analysis of the consultation responses will appear on the Department for Work and Pensions website in due course.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 27 January 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Age of Candidacy

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): The Government intend to legislate, when parliamentary time allows, to lower the age at which a candidate may stand for election from 21 to 18 years old. Such a change in policy is consistent with the recommendation made by the independent Electoral Commission in its report "The Age of Electoral Majority" published in April 2004.

DEFENCE

Review of Modelling of the Demolitions at Khamisiyah

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): I am publishing today the Ministry of Defence paper "Review of Modelling of the Demolitions at Khamisiyah in March 1991 and Implications for UK Personnel". The purpose of the paper is to evaluate recent work undertaken by the US Department of Defence (DoD) which modelled the distribution of nerve agent released by US demolitions of Iraqi chemical weapons at the end of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict and to discuss its implications for UK personnel.

The MOD has assessed the 2002 DoD model carefully and welcomes the improvements incorporated. The model better estimates the size and nature of the possible area of exposure. However, MOD notes that it utilises wide parameters in order to include the maximum number of personnel who could potentially have been exposed to any level of nerve agent. While it is appropriate to include a margin of this kind, MOD believes that the limits used in the model somewhat overstate the potential risk to UK troops. Nonetheless, MOD has used the model for its own analysis and concludes that:

> The model results in a generally smaller geographic exposure area than that described in earlier models.
>
> As estimated previously, approximately 9,000 UK Service personnel may have been within the area of possible exposure, with the closest some 130 km from Khamisiyah.
>
> The level of nerve agent would have been too low to have any biologically detectable effect on UK troops and would have a minimal impact on health; again this is consistent with previous findings.

I am today placing copies of the paper in the Library of the House and it is being placed on the Ministry of Defence website at: www.gulfwar.mod.uk

Iraq

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): Following the expiry of the Dutch mandate in Iraq and the planned withdrawal of its force of 1,400 personnel from Al Muthanna province in Iraq in March, the United Kingdom has, in its role as framework nation, reviewed with allies how security should continue to be provided in this part of multi-national division (South East) (MND(SE)).

We have greatly appreciated the valuable contribution made by the Dutch Battle Group in Iraq. Dutch forces have made good progress in Al Muthanna, both in ensuring the stability of the province and building the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). This means that a significantly smaller force package is now able to perform these tasks and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) MND(SE) has concluded that a force of some 600 personnel will be adequate to support and mentor Iraqi Security Forces in providing general security in Al Muthanna, as well as providing protection for the Japanese reconstruction battalion located there.

The majority of the personnel required will come from UK units already deployed in Iraq, principally the Queen's Dragoon Guards and the 2nd Battalion, the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment. A small number of additional personnel will also need to be deployed to provide logistics and other essential support to the force in Al Muthanna. This will temporarily increase the total number of UK personnel in Iraq by approximately 220, although this will subsequently fall to approximately 150, once the initial deployment to Al Muthanna is completed. Overall, however, the number of UK personnel deployed in Iraq is planned to fall by the end of February as the withdrawal of the extremely high readiness reserve takes place following the Iraqi elections.

In the meantime, we continue to consult with allies on the best way to meet security tasks in the province.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Chairman of English Partnerships (Reappointment)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I wish to announce that Margaret Ford has been reappointed as Chairman of English Partnerships to serve a further three year term with effect from 1 April 2005. English Partnerships is the national regeneration agency supporting high quality sustainable growth in England.

Local Government Finance Settlement 2005–06

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): I have today laid before the House, the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2005–06. This report establishes the amounts of revenue support grant (RSG) and non-domestic rates (NDR) to be paid to local authorities in 2005–06, and the basis of their distribution. A draft of this report was issued for consultation on 2 December 2004.

I have also today laid before the House the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2003–04: Amending Report 2005. This report sets out the amended basis for distribution of RSG and NDR for 2003–04 following the incorporation of revised data into the calculations for the local government finance settlement for that year. A draft of this report was issued for consultation on 18 November 2004.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received a total of 299 written representations within the consultation deadlines from the Local Government Association and the Association of London Government, from local authorities, local authority groups and Honourable Members, and Ministers met with delegations from six local authority associations and representative groups to discuss the proposals.

Having considered the views of the local authority associations and others who have commented on the provisional settlement, I have decided to confirm my proposals on the bases of distribution for 2005–06 and the amended bases for distribution for 2003–04.

The final figures published today for the 2005–06 settlement reflect the more accurate data and resource totals that have become available since we published our proposals, and also appropriate data corrections to reflect errors discovered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or notified to us by local authorities.

This year's settlement represents a continued real terms increase in investment in local government, which will allow authorities to continue to deliver improving services at an affordable cost. We have provided an extra £408 million in formula grant above the published plans for local government for 2005–06. As a result, total formula grant for 2005–06 will be 5.6 per cent. higher than in 2004–05. This is the eighth successive year in which Government have provided local government overall with an increase in total Government grant above inflation, and combined with specific and special grants brings the total increase in money from Government to local councils to 33 per cent. in real terms since 1997.

I shall be sending copies of these reports to all local authorities, and making available full supporting information on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0506/grant.htm

Copies of the reports and related tables showing each authority's formula spending shares and its allocation of RSG and NDR, and other supporting material in the Vote Office and the Library.

Gypsy and Traveller Sites

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): We are publishing today the Government response to the ODPM Select Committee Report on Gypsy and Traveller Sites. We welcome the Committee's report as a very helpful and thorough contribution to the work we already have underway in addressing the demand for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and issues related to it.

We are already taking forward a number of measures to tackle the problems arising from the shortage of suitable Gypsy and Traveller accommodation experienced over many years and although our approach may differ in some ways from what the Committee suggests it is clear that we share common concerns and a determination to see effective remedies put in place.

We believe our decision to mainstream the funding and provision of Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs within the housing and planning systems is the key not only to providing the Gypsy and Traveller accommodation which is so sorely needed but a means to foster greater social inclusion between the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community generally.

HEALTH

Shipman Inquiry

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): Dame Janet Smith, Chairman of the Shipman Inquiry, published her sixth report "Shipman: The Final Report" today. Copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Once again the Government express their profound thanks to Dame Janet Smith and her team for their work throughout the lifetime of the inquiry. We also reiterate our sympathy to all the relatives and friends of Shipman's victims and express our thanks to them for their valuable contribution to the inquiry's work.

Shipman Inquiry (Fifth Report)

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): In December, my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lord Warner) announced that the launch of the General Medical Council's revalidation scheme should not start until doubts raised by Dame Janet Smith had been resolved. He said that it would be unfair to doctors and confusing for patients to start the new revalidation scheme until the question marks raised by Dame Janet on the evidence doctors would be required to submit had been answered.

His announcement followed the publication of the fifth Shipman Report, *"Safeguarding Patients: Lessons from the past—Proposals for the Future"*. In her report, Dame Janet Smith made it clear that she had concerns that the GMC's revised fitness to practise and revalidation procedures would not help to improve patient protection or safety sufficiently.

I take what Dame Janet has said very seriously. I am determined to respond carefully and robustly to her recommendations to ensure that we develop a very strong patient protection plan. We want to put an end to the idea that the General Medical Council is a representative body for doctors. It is not. Its primary role must be to protect patients.

In order to ensure that it does this effectively I have asked the chief medical officer for England, Sir Liam Donaldson to undertake a review and report his advice to me on what further measures are necessary to:

> Strengthen procedures for assuring the safety of patients in situations where a doctor's performance or conduct pose a risk to patient safety or the effective functioning of services.

Ensure the operation of an effective system of revalidation.

Reconfigure the role, structure and functions of the General Medical Council.

I have asked the chief medical officer to report to me later this year. This will minimise any delay to the introduction of measures that will both improve patient safety and ensure that doctors are fit to practise. The chief medical officer will put an emphasis on patient safety. He will draw on the findings and recommendations made by Dame Janet and other inquiries on poor clinical performance and misconduct. An advisory group that includes experts from organisations representing consumer, healthcare quality and professional interests will support him.

Dame Janet made a number of recommendations not directly covered by the terms of reference of the chief medical officer's review. Our consideration of these recommendations will continue in parallel to the work of the review, focusing particularly on improving measures designed to safeguard patients and improve the quality of the services provided to them.

The full list of interest groups represented on the CMO's advisory group are:

Professor Carol Black, President of the Royal College of Physicians;

Professor Sir Graeme Catto, President of the General Medical Council;

Mr James Johnson, Chairman of the British Medical Association;

Professor Sir Ian Kennedy, Chairman of the Healthcare Commission;

Mr Harry Cayton, Director for the Patients and Public;

Dr Sheila Adam, Director of Public Health of the North East London Strategic Health Authority;

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, President of the Society of Cardiothoracic Surgeons of Great Britain and Ireland;

Professor Angela Coulter, Chief Executive of the Picker Institute;

Ms Janice Barber, Managing Partner at Hempsons Solicitors;

Clara MaKay, Director of Policy and Research at Breast Cancer Care;

Dr Mayur Lakhani, Chairman of Council at the Royal College of General Practitioners;

Mr Michael Morgan, Director of the Change Partnership; former Human Resources Director of Northern Food;

Niall Dickson, Director of the King's Fund;

Malcolm Dean, Journalist at the Guardian Newspaper;

Mrs Karen Straughair, Chief Executive of Sunderland Teaching Primary Care Trust;

Jenny Simpson, Chief Executive of the British Association of Medical Managers;

Captain Lowe, former Chief Pilot at British Airways;

Ed Mayo, Chief Executive of the National Consumer Council; and

Jane Wesson, Chair of the Council for Healthcare Regulatory Excellence.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Grant Report 2005–06 and the Amending Report 2003–04

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library a copy of the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2005–06 (HC 246). The report sets out my determination for 2005–06 of the aggregate amount of grants that I propose to pay under section 46(2) of the Police Act 1996, and the amount to be paid to each police authority and to the Greater London Authority for the Metropolitan Police Authority.

I have also placed in the Library a copy of the Police Grant Report (England and Wales) 2003–04 (Amending Report 2004–05) (HC 247) to take account of changes to Office of National Statistics population data.

General police grant allocations for each police authority for financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06 are set out in Table 1. Amended allocations for 2003–04 are set out in Table 2.

Table 1 General grant allocations for each police authority for financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06

Police Authority	2004–05 Allocation[1] £m	2005–06 Allocation[1] £m	Change %	2003–04 Amending Report Change £m	2005–06 Allocation Net of AR Change £m	Change %
			English Shire forces			
Avon & Somerset	162.2	170.0	4.81%	0.0	170.0	4.80%
Bedfordshire	62.1	65.1	4.85%	-0.2	64.9	4.53%
Cambridgeshire	73.4	77.9	6.08%	0.1	78.0	6.28%
Cheshire	107.2	111.3	3.75%	0.2	111.5	3.95%
Cleveland	86.8	90.9	4.67%	0.2	91.1	4.87%
Cumbria	59.6	62.1	4.13%	−0.2	61.9	3.76%
Derbyshire	101.2	105.0	3.75%	0.0	105.0	3.75%
Devon & Cornwall	166.8	173.0	3.75%	0.0	173.0	3.75%
Dorset	63.6	66.0	3.75%	0.0	66.0	3.75%
Durham	84.2	87.8	4.30%	−0.4	87.4	3.77%
Essex	160.9	167.0	3.75%	0.0	167.0	3.75%
Gloucestershire	58.9	61.1	3.77%	0.0	61.1	3.77%
Hampshire	190.5	197.7	3.75%	0.0	197.7	3.75%
Hertfordshire	104.8	108.8	3.77%	0.0	108.8	3.77%
Humberside	114.6	118.9	3.75%	0.2	119.1	3.95%
Kent	182.6	189.5	3.75%	0.0	189.5	3.75%
Lancashire	182.9	190.8	4.31%	0.4	191.1	4.52%

Table 1: General grant allocations for each police authority for financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06

Police Authority	*2004–05 Allocation*[1] *£m*	*2005–06 Allocation*[1] *£m*	*Change %*	*2003–04 Amending Report Change £m*	*2005–06 Allocation Net of AR Change £m*	*Change %*
Leicestershire	102.0	107.7	5.61%	−0.3	107.4	5.33%
Lincolnshire	60.6	63.4	4.51%	0.0	63.4	4.51%
Norfolk	82.2	85.9	4.51%	−0.5	85.4	3.93%
North Yorkshire	72.7	75.4	3.75%	0.0	75.4	3.75%
Northamptonshire	64.3	67.8	5.46%	0.1	67.9	5.66%
Nottinghamshire	127.6	133.3	4.50%	−0.5	132.8	4.08%
Staffordshire	109.2	113.3	3.75%	0.0	113.3	3.75%
Suffolk	66.0	68.5	3.75%	0.0	68.5	3.75%
Surrey	88.2	91.5	3.75%	0.0	91.5	3.75%
Sussex	158.1	164.0	3.75%	0.0	164.0	3.75%
Thames Valley	212.7	220.6	3.75%	0.0	220.6	3.75%
Warwickshire	49.8	51.8	4.03%	0.0	51.8	4.03%
West Mercia	107.7	111.8	3.75%	0.0	111.8	3.75%
Wiltshire	60.6	62.9	3.91%	−0.1	62.9	3.76%
Shires Total	3,324.0	3,460.6	4.11%	−1.0	3,459.6	4.08%
			English Metropolitan forces			
Greater Manchester	393.2	412.5	4.89%	0.8	413.3	5.10%
Merseyside	248.4	257.7	3.75%	0.5	258.2	3.95%
Northumbria	221.4	232.2	4.87%	0.4	232.6	5.08%
South Yorkshire	178.0	185.7	4.33%	−1.0	184.7	3.77%
West Midlands	399.3	426.5	6.81%	0.8	427.3	7.01%
West Yorkshire	298.9	313.6	4.95%	0.6	314.2	5.15%
Mets Total	1,739.1	1,828.1	5.12%	2.2	1,830.3	5.24%
			London forces			
GLA—Police	1,822.0	1,927.8	5.81%	4.2	1,932.1	6.04%
City of London[2]	32.7	35.7	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
London Total	1,854.7	1,963.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
English Total	6,917.8	7,252.3	4.83%	5.4	7,257.7	4.83%
			Welsh forces			
Dyfed-Powys[3]	50.3	52.2	3.75%	0.0	52.2	3.75%
Gwent[3]	71.1	74.1	4.17%	−0.3	73.8	3.77%
North Wales[3]	75.2	78.3	4.06%	−0.2	78.0	3.76%
South Wales[3]	168.2	174.5	3.75%	0.0	174.5	3.75%
Welsh total	364.9	379.1	3.90%	−0.5	378.6	3.76%
TOTAL	7,282.7	7,631.4	4.79%	4.9	7,636.3	4.85%

Notes:

1. Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance (Police) Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.
2. Figures for the City of London relate to Home Office Grant only as calculated in the Police Grant Report (England and Wales). Revenue Support Grant is allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is grouped with education authorities for the purposes of floors and ceilings.
3. Welsh base positions are adjusted to account for the transfer of PFI funding out of RSG.

Table 2: Amended general grant allocations for each police authority in 2003–04 against original 2003–04 allocations

Police Authority	*2003–04 Original Allocation*[1] *£m*	*2003–04 Amended Allocation*[1] *£m*	*Change between original and amended 2003–04 £m*	
		English Shire forces		
Avon & Somerset	157.1	157.1	0.0	0.0%
Bedfordshire	60.1	59.9	−0.2	−0.3%
Cambridgeshire	71.1	71.2	0.1	0.2%
Cheshire	103.9	104.1	0.2	0.2%
Cleveland	84.1	84.2	0.2	0.2%
Cumbria	57.3	57.5	0.2	0.4%
Derbyshire	97.9	97.9	0.0	0.0%
Devon & Cornwall	161.5	161.5	0.0	0.0%
Dorset	61.6	61.6	0.0	0.0%
Durham	81.5	81.1	−0.4	−0.5%
Essex	155.9	155.9	0.0	0.0%
Gloucestershire	57.0	57.0	0.0	0.0%
Hampshire	184.5	184.5	0.0	0.0%
Hertfordshire	101.5	101.5	0.0	0.0%
Humberside	110.9	111.2	0.2	0.2%
Kent	176.8	176.8	0.0	0.0%
Lancashire	177.1	177.5	0.4	0.2%
Leicestershire	98.8	98.5	−0.3	−0.3%
Lincolnshire	58.7	58.7	0.0	0.0%
Norfolk	79.6	79.1	−0.5	−0.6%
North Yorkshire	70.4	70.4	0.0	0.0%
Northamptonshire	62.2	62.4	0.1	0.2%
Nottinghamshire	123.6	123.0	−0.5	−0.4%
Staffordshire	105.8	105.8	0.0	0.0%
Suffolk	63.9	63.9	0.0	0.0%
Surrey	85.4	85.4	0.0	0.0%
Sussex	153.1	153.1	0.0	0.0%
Thames Valley	205.9	205.9	0.0	0.0%
Warwickshire	48.2	48.2	0.0	0.0%
West Mercia	104.4	104.4	0.0	0.0%
Wiltshire	58.7	58.6	−0.1	−0.2%
Total	3,218.8	3,217.8	−1.0	0.0%

Table 2 Amended general grant allocations for each police authority in 2003–04 against original 2003–04 allocations

Police Authority	2003–04 Original Allocation[1] £m	2003–04 Amended Allocation[1] £m	Change between original and amended 2003–04 £m	
		English Metropolitan forces		
Greater Manchester	380.8	381.6	0.8	0.2%
Merseyside	240.5	241.0	0.5	0.2%
Northumbria	214.3	214.8	0.4	0.2%
South Yorkshire	172.3	171.3	−1.0	−0.6%
West Midlands	386.5	387.3	0.8	0.2%
West Yorkshire	289.4	290.0	0.6	0.2%
Total	1,683.8	1,686.0	2.2	0.1%
		London forces		
GLA Police	1,764.1	1,768.3	4.2	0.2%
City of London[2]	96.2	96.2	0.0	0.0%
Total	1,860.3	1,864.5	4.2	0.2%
English Total	6,762.9	6,768.3	5.4	0.1%
		Welsh forces		
Dyfed-Powys[3]	49.3	49.3	0.0	0.0%
Gwent[3]	69.6	69.3	−0.3	−0.4%
North Wales[3]	73.3	73.1	−0.2	−0.3%
South Wales[3]	163.0	163.0	0.0	0.0%
Welsh total	355.2	354.7	−0.5	−0.1%
TOTAL	7,118.1	7,123.0	4.9	0.1%

Notes

1. Grant includes principal Home Office Police Grant, ODPM WAG Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates, as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance Report (Wales). Figures are rounded to the nearest £100k and percentages rounded to one decimal point. Grant includes the effects of floors and ceilings.

2. RSG figures for the City are allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is in the Education floors and ceilings group and received a ceiling settlement of 8 per cent.

3. Welsh figures include Home Office specific grant floor payments for Dyfed-Powys and South Wales.

Criminal Records Bureau

The Minister for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I am pleased to announce that the Criminal Records Bureau annual report and accounts 2003–04 has been published today and I am pleased to say that copies of the report have been placed in the Library of the House.

Police (Firearms)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): The statistics for 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004 show that the number of police operations in which firearms were issued was 16,657. The number of times a conventional firearm was discharged by police was eight which covered four incidents. A baton round was discharged on 15 occasions and a Taser was fired on 13 occasions as less lethal alternatives to conventional firearms.

Armed response vehicles were deployed on 13,218 occasions and there were 6,099 authorised firearms officers in England and Wales.

Full details are set out in the tables below:

Number of Operations in which Firearms were Authorised

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Total	11,109	13,991	14,827	16,657
Avon & Somerset	65	195	262	311
Bedfordshire	294	237	301	442
Cambridgeshire	71	114	57	104
Cheshire	545	419	451	397
Cleveland	28	37	170	453
City of London	3	40	131	364
Cumbria	30	71	77	72
Derbyshire	167	275	401	369
Devon & Cornwall	151	101	96	112
Dorset	174	184	193	231
Durham	40	89	83	156
Essex	435	323	312	275
Gloucestershire	48	165	185	127
Gtr Manchester	357	580	518	507
Hampshire	114	198	162	208
Hertfordshire	86	112	172	195
Humberside	158	297	187	183
Kent	83	115	137	207
Lancashire	242	232	238	318
Leicestershire	217	300	268	295
Lincolnshire	336	477	392	386
Merseyside	825	1,020	628	751
Metropolitan	1,862	2,447	3,199	3,563
Norfolk	226	175	200	178
Northamptonshire	58	43	138	148
Northumbria	708	1,440	1,275	1,140
North Yorkshire	72	92	100	147
Nottinghamshire	233	384	452	459
South Yorkshire	127	258	463	484
Staffordshire	203	232	281	255
Suffolk	176	163	270	251
Surrey	221	245	247	203
Sussex	353	248	204	280
Thames Valley	153	179	167	195
Warwickshire	233	130	149	164
West Mercia	36	117	91	197
West Midlands	485	822	902	1,377
West Yorkshire	822	757	604	575
Wiltshire	66	45	58	63
Dyfed Powys	18	28	29	28
Gwent	30	20	37	40
North Wales	195	302	259	197
South Wales	363	283	281	250

Number of Authorised Firearms Offices (AFOs)

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Total	6,064	5,776	5,763	6,096
Avon & Somerset	135	116	84	122
Bedfordshire	45	48	53	58
Cambridgeshire	73	56	71	60
Cheshire	74	81	89	75
Cleveland	75	85	80	95
City of London	74	73	72	86
Cumbria	94	92	87	89
Derbyshire	81	80	69	70
Devon & Cornwall	100	108	115	132
Dorset	67	57	59	60
Durham	101	86	102	97
Essex	195	180	184	186
Gloucestershire	72	71	80	82
Gtr Manchester	240	219	202	205
Hampshire	100	87	94	94
Hertfordshire	44	46	47	50
Humberside	102	96	96	96
Kent	136	113	93	90
Lancashire	132	138	129	122
Leicestershire	85	69	68	51
Lincolnshire	80	91	87	78
Merseyside	103	78	84	94
Metropolitan	1,940	1,805	1,823	2,060
Norfolk	114	104	109	114
Northamptonshire	77	51	56	52
Northumbria	109	125	99	90
North Yorkshire	66	66	64	60

Number of Authorised Firearms Offices (AFOs)

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Nottinghamshire	137	136	131	138
South Yorkshire	98	92	100	98
Staffordshire	67	71	63	67
Suffolk	90	90	80	96
Surrey	72	62	48	53
Sussex	118	120	141	134
Thames Valley	185	156	180	172
Warwickshire	45	50	51	46
West Mercia	130	125	131	139
West Midlands	83	111	110	124
West Yorkshire	117	116	132	140
Wiltshire	71	71	78	80
Dyfed Powys	61	77	62	58
Gwent	66	57	60	71
North Wales	67	83	75	73
South Wales	143	138	125	139

Number of Operations Involving Armed Response Vehicles (ARVs)

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Total	8,179	11,574	11,848	13,218
Avon & Somerset	56	173	215	249
Bedfordshire	253	172	269	414
Cambridgeshire	36	43	45	155
Cheshire	441	523	337	356
Cleveland	16	13	63	86
City of London	30	39	131	364
Cumbria	27	53	45	65
Derbyshire	152	253	363	312
Devon & Cornwall	121	76	32	94
Dorset	155	182	180	215
Durham	31	57	66	96
Essex	206	165	176	138
Gloucestershire	39	140	166	109
Gtr Manchester	302	528	406	440
Hampshire	84	116	108	128
Hertfordshire	65	81	129	157
Humberside	136	273	170	158
Kent	64	89	132	193
Lancashire	177	192	185	273
Leicestershire	195	292	232	269
Lincolnshire	324	470	367	355
Merseyside	75	974	547	687
Metropolitan	1,380	1,667	2,447	2,423
Norfolk	192	157	186	169
Northamptonshire	35	25	90	99
Northumbria	655	1,349	1,204	1,063
North Yorkshire	54	60	67	110
Nottinghamshire	207	333	397	404
South Yorkshire	103	221	280	322
Staffordshire	136	208	241	212
Suffolk	103	116	160	194
Surrey	192	225	240	190
Sussex	245	189	171	250
Thames Valley	108	174	167	179
Warwickshire	194	104	31	138
West Mercia	26	100	111	241
West Midlands	243	563	592	975
West Yorkshire	785	609	565	543
Wiltshire	48	43	39	28
Dyfed Powys	18	28	29	28
Gwent	17	16	16	23
North Wales	155	265	198	153
South Wales	298	218	253	161

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Domestic Dog and Cat Fur (Alleged Imports)

The Minister for Trade and Investment (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The Government promised to report back to both Houses 12 months from my predecessor's statement to the House on 28 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 11–12WS on the alleged import of domestic cat and dog fur into the UK.

The Government understand the ethical abhorrence felt about this issue. Our priority remains to establish the facts about the extent of this alleged trade and to act in a measured way. To this end, we encouraged interested parties to come forward with hard evidence of such fur being on sale in the UK and we undertook work to establish a reliable scientific test to identify between different species of fur.

In July 2003 the Government invited interested parties to produce hard evidence of a problem in the UK, but to date there is no substantive evidence that such fur is entering the UK in significant and commercial quantities, if at all.

The Government have been working in parallel to establish a scientific test to make it possible to reliably ascertain what species of animal any given fur sample has come from. Such a test is essential to enable trading standards officers to address allegations of mislabelling arising under the existing Trade Descriptions Act and to help establish whether domestic cat and dog fur is on sale in the UK.

Last January we reported back on work commissioned on the mass spectrometry means of distinguishing the furs of domestic cat and dogs from that of other animal species. Scientific experts at the former Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC Ltd.) concluded that mass spectrometry was not yet sufficiently reliable.

The database of fur samples on which the mass spectrometry method relies, together with the search algorithms used in testing were improved in the year since the last tests were commissioned. On the basis of new tests commissioned in autumn 2004, LGC Ltd. has concluded that from this limited trial, the use MALDI TOF Mass Spectrometry to identify domestic dog and cat hair from other species is a viable option, although a question mark remains on identifying fur which has been chemically treated.

The UK keeps in touch with officials in several countries where the possible trade in domestic cat and dog fur is a concern, including the USA, Australia, France, Belgium and Sweden. We will be sharing our findings from the "mass spectrometry" trials with these governments and with all our European partners.

The Government position remains that without hard evidence of such imports at commercial levels to the UK, we will not consider legislation and that any action would be most effective if taken at EU level. The Government continue to welcome input and evidence from interested stakeholders and will continue to share information with other Governments, particularly those in Europe.

TRANSPORT

Railways Bill (Scotland)

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr. Tony McNulty): The provisions in the Railways Bill, which is due to complete its Commons consideration today, would devolve to the Scottish Ministers additional powers and functions to determine Scottish railway strategies; to let, monitor and manage the Scotrail franchise; and to specify rail infrastructure needs in Scotland. They will also be able to set fares and fund improvements to the railway. Only some functions—principally safety and the licensing of railway operators—will remain reserved to UK Ministers.

The changes in the Railways Bill affect the executive powers of the Scottish Ministers. Responsibility for primary legislation dealing with the management and operation of railways remains reserved to the Westminster Parliament.

Under the Sewel Convention the Government have committed not to vary the executive competence of the Scottish Ministers without the consent of the Scottish Parliament. Therefore, in order to legislate in the Railways Bill the Parliament must give its consent to the Sewel motion for those aspects of the Bill which relate to devolving additional executive powers and functions to the Scottish Ministers. The motion put to the Scottish Parliament was:

Railways Bill:

> "That the Parliament agrees that those provisions that confer executive powers and functions on the Scottish Ministers in the Railways Bill and those that relate to devolved matters should be considered by the UK Parliament".

The Scottish Parliament considered and agreed this motion on 26 January.

To support these devolved responsibilities, the Secretary of State has announced that agreement has been reached with Scottish Ministers to transfer approximately £325 million to the Scottish Executive which would provide sufficient funding to cover all the responsibilities being transferred by virtue of the Railways Bill.

As part of this settlement the following funding transfers have been agreed:

> The Scottish Executive will receive a Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) transfer from the Department for Transport (DfT) of £7.5 million to accompany the transfer of the majority of the Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA's) functions to the Scottish Executive. This sum represents the application of the Barnett formula (0.1023) to 75 per cent. of the relevant SRA budgets for 2004–05.
>
> The Scottish Executive will receive a DEL transfer from DfT of £302 million to fund Network Rail's Operation, Maintenance and Renewals activities in Scotland to deliver the network outputs in Scotland. This will take effect from 1 April 2006.
>
> A significant proportion of the £302 million total relates to a new Scotland element of Network Rail's regulatory asset base (RAB). The disagregation of the current GB RAB into elements for Scotland and for England and Wales will be determined by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR) before the end of 2005, following joint representations by DfT and the Scottish Executive. The DfT and Scottish Executive will each receive funding precisely sufficient to remunerate their respective RABs. The Scottish Executive and DfT agree that the best estimate that can be made of the RAB for Scotland in advance of the ORR's determination is that it will be very close to 10 per cent. of the RAB for Great Britain, which is the basis on which the RAB spend above is calculated.

In addition, in order to fund rail enhancements the Scottish Executive will receive the following:

> a DEL transfer of £17 million from 1 April 2006;
>
> a proportionate increase, via the application of the Barnett Formula, of future increases in DfT's spending on enhancements in England and Wales as an outcome from future Spending Reviews.

Scotland will also benefit from a proportionate share of the following funding sources:

> A 10 per cent. share of the planned "small schemes pot" funding for Network Rail to take forward small enhancement schemes, as was announced in the White Paper.
>
> The undertaking of enhancement works in Scotland to enable compliance with the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Finally, the ORR will have the same range of responsibilities in Scotland as in England and Wales. Like the Secretary of State for Transport, Scottish Ministers will be required to provide guidance to the ORR on desired outputs, and ORR will determine the cost of delivering these outputs. To reflect the fact that in future Network Rail will be funded by two Governments, a separate binding arrangement between Scottish Ministers and Network Rail will be established, similar to the parallel binding arrangement between UK Ministers and Network Rail. No transfer of resources is required to reflect these arrangements.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Southampton City Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI) report on Southampton City Council's processing of claims for housing benefits was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library. In 2003–04 Southampton City Council administered approximately £67.5 million in housing benefits. This is approximately 13 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Southampton City Council was selected for inspection because it was taking 99 days on average to process new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit claims compared to the Department for Work and Pensions standard of 36 days.

BFI found that the council had made improvements since the first BFI inspection report, published in 2002 and that in the first quarter of 2004–05 new claims performance had improved to 57 days. The Verification Framework was introduced in October 2002 and claims are now being verified to a high standard. A comprehensive set of management checking procedures is now in place and claims are monitored to identify if a payment on account is required. Although these factors have improved the quality of new claims processing, there needs to be more proactive management at all stages of the new claims process if Southampton City Council is to reach the standard of 36 days.

The report makes recommendations to help the council improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit. It also contains the council's action plan for implementation of the recommendations.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings and recommendations.

Chelmsford Borough Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) report on Chelmsford borough council's processing of claims for housing benefits was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library. In 2003–04 Chelmsford borough council administered some £27 million in housing benefits. This is approximately 36 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Chelmsford borough council was selected for inspection because it was reporting that it was taking 101 days on average to process new housing benefit and council tax benefit claims, compared to the Department for Work and Pensions standard of 36 days.

At the time of inspection only 33 per cent. of new claims were decided within 14 days of all information being available and claims were taking an average of 93 days from date of receipt to date of decision. The council attributed poor clearance times over the last two years to the effects of introducing new IT and document management systems and the verification framework over a short period in late 2003. There were delays at most stages of the new claims process and staff lacked confidence in the new benefits IT and document management systems.

Also, although Chelmsford borough council had good policies and procedures for verifying claims, these were not always followed. There were clear strengths in verification of identity, confirming residency and verifying national insurance numbers, but weaknesses in other areas.

Chelmsford borough council is aware of its problems and has already sought assistance from the Department for Work and Pensions Performance development team.

The report makes recommendations to help the council improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings and recommendations.

Wyre Borough Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) report on Wyre borough council's processing of claims for housing benefits was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library. In 2002–03 Wyre borough council administered approximately £19 million in housing benefits. This is approximately 45 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Wyre borough council was selected for inspection as it was taking on average just 23 days to process new housing benefit and council tax benefit claims, compared to the Department for Work and Pensions standard of 36 days. This suggested scope for BFI to identify and disseminate good practices.

Over a two year period Wyre borough council has achieved significant improvements in both the speed and accuracy of processing claims. Its performance on the average time for processing new claims improved from 71 days in 2001–02 to 33 days in 2003–04. Its reported performance of cases processed accurately was 93 per cent. in 2001–02 rising to 98 per cent. in 2003–04.

Wyre borough council achieved this very good performance through a change programme that made significant changes to work processes and how work and staff were managed and monitored.

By taking an informed and incremental approach Wyre borough council has developed its benefits service so that it now delivers a better service to customers, gives a high level of assurance to senior managers and elected members and provides development opportunities for staff.

BFI believes that improvements in Wyre borough council's strategic management, by, for example, developing procedural guidance would further enhance performance.

The report makes recommendations to help the council improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings and recommendations.

Renfrewshire Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the benefit fraud inspectorate (BFI) report on Renfrewshire council's processing of claims for housing benefits was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library. In 2003–04 Renfrewshire council administered some £51 million in housing benefits. This is approximately 11 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Renfrewshire council was selected for inspection because it was reporting that it was taking 87 days on average to process new housing benefit and council tax benefit claims, compared to the Department for Work and Pensions standard of 36 days. BFI found that errors in the council's use of its IT system led to incorrect calculations of the performance against the best value performance indicator. The council was actually taking an average of 43 days to process new claims for housing benefits.

Even within the actual times taken BFI found several process weaknesses that caused unnecessary delays in handling new claims and a weak management case-checking process that allowed errors to be repeated.

The report makes recommendations to help the council improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit. It also contains the council's action plan for implementation of the recommendations immediately.

The council has made organisational changes designed to address weaknesses in the management of the benefits service and responded positively to the findings from the inspection by implementing a number of the recommendations.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and may ask the council for its proposals in response to BFI's findings and recommendations.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 31 January 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Five-year Plan (People, Places and Prosperity)

The Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. John Prescott): In the sustainable communities plan which I published in February 2003, I set out how the Government would work to create successful, thriving and inclusive communities across England.

Sustainable communities are welcoming, prosperous places to live. They have the jobs, homes, schools, healthcare, transport and other services people need. A sustainable community meets the needs of all its citizens so that the most disadvantaged are not left behind. Our aim is to create communities that will stand the test of time, and places where people want to live.

My recent plan for housing, "Sustainable Communities: Homes for All", published last week, set out what we will do to give many more people more choice and fairness in housing—especially those who want a home of their own but cannot afford it.

But people live in neighbourhoods, not just in houses. So today, I am publishing a second five-year plan, "Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity", and copies have been laid in the Library. It is a partner to the first plan, and it sets out how we will work at every level to improve the communities that people live in. With it, I am publishing a number of other documents that give more details of its major themes.

"People, Places and Prosperity" sets out a strategy to:

Give people more of a say in the way places (both urban and rural) are run

Work through the town, city or county hall so that local authorities deliver excellent services, provide leadership for their areas, and empower their communities

Tackle disadvantage, so that people are not condemned to lives of poverty, poor services and disempowerment by accidents of birth or geography

Work through the regions to increase prosperity, and bring together the funding and plans which can best be co-ordinated at regional level.

The strategy is built on two main principles—the need to give communities more power and say in the decisions that affect them, and the importance of working with the right partners at the right level to get things done.

More power and say for communities in the decisions that affect them

In the past, many people thought that local decision making was not for them. They often felt distant and unheard by the people in power. But now, many more people are helping to shape the places where they live. Over a million more people have become engaged in their communities since 2001.

The policies and schemes that help people get involved in their communities—like community strategies, Sure Start, and the new deal for communities—act as nurseries for democracy, getting people involved who do not necessarily want to become local councillors. They have unlocked huge untapped energy and experience—giving people more influence over the decisions which matter to their community.

But we know that, despite this increase in voluntary activity, many people still feel they cannot make any real difference to the things that really matter to them. We need to reconnect politics with the things that people care about in their local communities—their public services, the state of their streets and towns, their sense of safety—by giving them more power and a bigger stake in the way their areas are run, and making sure their voices are heard in local, regional and national government.

So, I am announcing today that we will offer more opportunities for all communities to have more control over their own neighbourhoods. The aim is to have arrangements that give all neighbourhoods real power, but which are flexible enough to apply to a wide range of different circumstances; and have local councillors at their heart, rather than being set up in parallel to existing democratic structures.

As part of this, we propose a 'neighbourhoods charter', setting out what local people should expect, both in terms of outcomes—for example, safe, clean streets—and in terms of control or influence over their neighbourhoods. Some parts of the charter might be for every neighbourhood; others would be agreed between particular neighbourhoods, their local authorities, and other local partners, with more accountability needed where more power and influence was being transferred.

The kinds of powers agreed between local authorities and neighbourhoods would range widely, and might include:

Giving communities the ability to require action where local people are dissatisfied with the level of performance of a particular service, including triggers which require the local authority to take action

Model byelaws and new powers to levy penalty notices, to make it easier for communities to deal with issues that are causing problems, such as antisocial behaviour

Devolving budgets and giving communities the power to manage particular services directly

Giving communities ownership of some local assets like playgrounds and community centres and the chance to manage them themselves

A proposal for neighbourhood improvement districts, which, if agreed locally, could allow areas to vote to raise additional money to spend on local priorities.

In some places, local authorities have devolved funds from existing budgets for councillors to spend in consultation with their local neighbourhoods. This has been highly effective in galvanising action on some local issues, such as vandalism or rubbish, which are relatively inexpensive to sort out but which can be a source of major annoyance. It has also helped to create a positive spirit and energy within those bodies. We will encourage all local authorities to take up this idea.

As well as proposals for the neighbourhoods charter, the plan sets out ideas for ensuring more responsive local services, with better links to local people, including schools, health services, and the police; and our proposals for a more community-focused role for local councillors.

And it sets out a wide-ranging strategy to make places cleaner, safer and greener; with clean, safe streets free of anti-social behaviour, good quality, well-maintained parks and open spaces, and well-run, attractive and inclusive town centres.

Working at the right level

We want more chances for communities to get involved and make decisions, but we also know there are things that must be delivered by good, strong local authorities, and others that need a wider view, across a bigger region.

We need to ensure the right kind of involvement at each level—with people able to have their say, and decisions taken at the level that makes most sense. This also means that we need good decision-making at every level—with good leaders at every level who have a clear strategic vision, who are not defensive about giving more power to local communities, and who have the ability to deliver on their aspirations.

Alongside the "People, Places and Prosperity" plan, I am also publishing two discussion papers—"Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter" and "Vibrant Local Leadership". These are part of the development of a new strategy for local government—local vision—which we are taking forward through a series of discussion documents and a wide ranging debate with all stakeholders. Many of the things we set out in the main plan have been developed and will be delivered through the strategy, and are set out in more detail in these discussion papers.

The plan sets out how we will work through the town, city or county hall to develop councils' role in leading the locality—pulling together public agencies and key stakeholders to act together to secure excellent services and solve local problems, and enabling community empowerment. There will be:

Clearer roles for councillors—with a strong, visible executive and a distinctive role forcouncillors as advocates and leaders of their local community.

More opportunities for mayors for those that want them, particularly in our major cities, with greater power to make a real difference, backed up by strong roles for councillors in wards. We are consulting on proposals to offer more options on how councils are run

More local area agreements, to deliver better services based on shared priorities, and reduce the number of targets and funding streams for local authorities. There are 21 pilots under way, and I am today announcing a further phase of 40 pilots to be in place by April 2006.

We are also inviting views on a move to whole council elections every four years for all councils in England—providing greater clarity to voters and greater stability for councils.

We need to act at every level—neighbourhood, local, regional and national—if we are to give everyone the chance to live in a desirable, sustainable community. It is not enough to have a strong neighbourhood body if the local authority is not up to scratch; and even an excellent local authority cannot deliver the bigger economic growth and drive that a strong region might.

Our plan sets out how we will work through the regions to increase prosperity, and bring together funding and plans. There will be:

Action through all our regional institutions—the regional development agencies, regional assemblies and Government offices—to support strong economies in all regions, offering opportunities for everyone to share in increased prosperity

Action at the right level—whether it's work in core cities, at regional level, or across more than one region, like our successful northern way programme—to make a difference

A planning system which meets the needs of businesses and householders, while protecting the environment. Regional housing boards and regional planning bodies will be merged under the leadership of the regional assembly, to make sure that the right homes are built where they are needed and also that these are planned alongside other vital services. Our new legislation and guidance on planning puts sustainable development at the heart of the planning system, so that as we use planning to respond to business and housing need, we also protect the environment.

A strategic approach to skills, transport, planning and infrastructure, aspiring to increase the employment rate to 80 per cent., including 900,000 more people in work in areas outside the greater south-east.

Alongside "People, Places and Prosperity", we are publishing a series of nine regional documents, explaining the action being taken in each region to support prosperous, sustainable communities. Later this week, we will also be publishing more details of our work in the regions in "Realising the Potential of All Our Regions"; and the northern way steering group will publish its progress report, showing how the Government are working to make the northern way a success.

Tackling Disadvantage

As we seek to improve services and places for everyone, we need to keep a clear focus on those who are worst-off. A truly sustainable community must be a fair community, where everyone has the chance of a good education, a decent home, support for good health, and the opportunity to get a job. We need targeted action for the worst-off places and people; and we need to make sure that mainstream services do at least as well for the worst-off as they do for others.

Today's strategy sets out how we will tackle disadvantage, so that people are not condemned to lives of poverty, poor services and disempowerment by accidents of birth or geography. There will be:

Over £2.5 billion invested each year in practical work to tackle disadvantage in England, better targeted on those that need it most

Faster progress in education, health, work and cutting crime in the most deprived areas, and for the worst-off people—narrowing the gap

Housing-related support for over one million vulnerable people, to help them live independently and successfully

Better personalised public services which can meet individual needs better—not just for the well-off, but for everyone

Effective action to attract private sector investment into deprived areas.

I am also publishing today the joint report by the Prime Minister's strategy unit and the neighbourhood renewal unit, "Improving the prospects of people living in areas of multiple deprivation in England", and our progress report against the aims set out in the neighbourhood renewal strategy, "Making it Happen in

Neighbourhoods. Copies of all the documents published today will be available in the Library as well as on the ODPM website.

Conclusion

By putting local people in the driving seat, making sure that local democracy and regions are flourishing, and tackling disadvantage wherever it occurs, we will create thriving, sustainable communities across the country that people are proud to be part of. "People, Places and Prosperity", together with the housing strategy, "Homes for All", which I published last week, sets out how we will do it.

New Code of Audit Practice

The Minister for Local and Regional Government (Mr. Nick Raynsford): I have laid the Audit Commission's revised code of audit practice for consideration by the House. If approved, the code will prescribe the way in which auditors, appointed by the commission, are to carry out their functions to audit local government and NHS bodies under the Audit Commission Act 1998.

The Act requires the code to be approved by both Houses at least every five years. The current version of the code was approved in March 2000. The legislation also provides for the preparation of a "different code" with respect to the audit of accounts of health services bodies. The Audit Commission has decided to prepare separate codes for local government and the NHS, primarily to reflect the increasingly divergent accounting, corporate governance and performance management frameworks in the two sectors, but also to facilitate the process of agreeing with the Healthcare Commission those elements of the draft NHS code which relate to auditors' local value-for-money work.

The new codes reflect the significant changes both in the operating environment of local government and NHS bodies and in auditing standards and practice since the current code was prepared.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (Bedford Borough Council)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Bedford Borough Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, Bedford Borough Council administered some £37 million in housing benefits, about 52 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Following an invitation from Bedford Borough Council, BFI carried out an inspection in September 2004. The council's self-assessment against performance standards identified that it had reached standard in five functional areas and was above standard in two functional areas in August 2004.

The inspection found that Bedford Borough Council was indeed providing an excellent benefit service.

A new performance management system and clear strategic and operational planning and staff involvement at all levels resulted in strong performance and at the time of the inspection new claims and changes of circumstances were being processed in 25 days and six days respectively, against standards of 36 days and nine days.

The report notes a great deal of commitment and professionalism in Bedford Borough Council and a determination throughout the organisation to maintain the high level of performance achieved.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report, which I commend to other councils and hope they can use it to help bring about improvement in their own benefits services.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (London Borough of Harrow)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on London Borough of Harrow was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, London Borough of Harrow administered some £73 million in housing benefits, about 13 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

The inspection focused on the speed of processing new claims for benefit and changes of circumstances—areas of weakness in the past. The report identifies significant progress made by the council. Since the last inspection the council has introduced a number of changes, including a performance management system and implementing all recommendations relating to the processing of new claims and changes of circumstances made in the August 2003 BFI inspection report.

The report concludes the council's performance against the majority of the best value performance indicators has improved and the council has delivered significant improvements in the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings.

South Gloucestershire Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI focused inspection report on South Gloucestershire Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

I announced on 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 18WS, that BFI would undertake some shorter more focused inspections, designed to provide for quick improvements in performance in specific areas of benefits administration. The first of these inspections focus on the processing of claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit.

In 2003–04 South Gloucestershire Council administered some £34 million in housing benefits, about 10 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

South Gloucestershire council was selected for inspection because it had reported that it was taking 86 days on average to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit in 2003–04. This level of performance was in the bottom quartile of all reported performance and 50 days outside the standard of 36 days.

BFI found weaknesses in the council's benefits administration processes that contributed to this poor performance. These included: user errors, inaccurate management information, delays in transferring claims and further information from one-stop shops and housing offices to the main benefits processing office, delays in setting up council tax accounts and management checking processes that were not fully effective.

The report notes that the council had problems with the interfaces between itself and Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service. Benefits service staff told inspectors that delays in sharing information and issues around the consistency and accuracy of that information had led to delays in the processing of benefit claims. BFI made recommendations to ensure that problems in the exchange of information were quickly addressed and a national initiative by Jobcentre Plus to improve joint working will also help resolve this.

The report makes recommendations to help the council improve and since the inspection the council has informed BFI that the average time taken to process new claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit has fallen to 46 days.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Breckland District Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI focused inspection report on Breckland District Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

I announced on 29 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 18WS, that BFI would undertake shorter more focused inspections, designed to provide for quick improvements in performance in specific areas of benefits administration. The first of these inspections focus on the processing of claims for housing benefit and council tax benefit.

In 2003–04, Breckland District Council administered some £21 million in housing benefits, about 48 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

Breckland District Council was selected for inspection as it had demonstrated the capacity steadily to improve its performance for processing new claims. New claims were being processed within an impressive 25 days at the time of BFI's inspection in September 2004. The inspection sought to identify the good practices behind this dramatic improvement.

In August 2003, Breckland District Council had formed the Anglia revenues and benefits partnership with Forest Heath District Council to deliver a revenues and benefits service to customers of both councils.

The partnership incorporated the co-location of Forest Heath and Breckland benefits staff, and a clear corporate vision and objectives that had been translated successfully into paying claims quickly and accurately. The report identified a number of good practices in the areas of management checking, target setting and monitoring.

BFI found that the quality of claims processing was consistently of a very high standard, particularly in verifying claims.

The report makes recommendations to improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit further.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Glasgow City Council (Benefit Fraud Inspectorate)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Chris Pond): On behalf of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the BFI inspection report on Glasgow City Council was published today and copies of the report have been placed in the Library.

Following the housing Green Paper "Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All", published in April 2000, the Department for Work and Pensions developed a performance framework for housing benefits. The performance standards allow local authorities to make a comprehensive self-assessment of whether they deliver benefit effectively and securely. They are the standards that the Department for Work and Pensions expects local authorities to aspire to and achieve in time.

In 2003–04, Glasgow City Council administered some £350 million in housing benefits, about 17 per cent. of its gross revenue expenditure.

BFI's first inspection of Glasgow City Council, in March 2001, reported that it needed to develop a more effective, efficient and secure benefits administration system.

This follow-up inspection assessed the council against the performance standards. While the council did not meet standard in any of the seven functional areas, the report concludes that it has made significant progress since the first inspection. Its overall level of performance was assessed as fair.

Customers received a good service in terms of caller facilities and the council had made significant improvements in the speed of processing claims. However it was failing to protect the gateway to benefits effectively due to inadequate verification of new claims and a lack of interventions after a benefit had been awarded.

The council had taken a number of positive steps to improve the overpayment recovery process and while it had made a significant investment in resources for its benefit counter-fraud unit, there continued to be insufficient controls around the number and quality of investigations.

BFI found a clear commitment to improve performance including plans to implement new benefits IT systems and the implementation of the Department's verification framework.

The report makes recommendations further to improve the administration of housing benefit and council tax benefit, as well as counter-fraud activities.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is now considering the report and will be asking the council for its proposals in response to the BFI's findings and recommendations.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 1 February 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Planning Policy Statement 1—Delivering Sustainable Development

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is today publishing the Government's new planning policy statement 1 (PPS1), "Delivering Sustainable Development". Copies of the document will be made available in the Libraries of both Houses. This new statement which applies in England, replaces planning policy guidance note 1 (PPG1), "General Policy and Principles", published February 1997.

PPS1 is one of the new series of shorter, sharper planning policy statements that are an important component of the Government's package of reforms for the planning system. PPS1 itself sets the context for the planning system and for other topic-specific policy statements. The policies set out in PPS1 will need to be taken into account by regional planning bodies in the preparation of regional spatial strategies, by the Mayor of London in relation to the spatial development strategy in London, and by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents. They may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications.

The consultation draft of PPS1, entitled "Creating Sustainable Communities", was published in February 2004. Over 300 responses to the consultation draft were received. The Government have carefully considered the views expressed in preparing the final version of the document.

With its new title of "Delivering Sustainable Development", PPS1 reflects the duty on regional and local planning bodies to contribute towards sustainable development when preparing development plans, as required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The policies seek to ensure balance in the integrated consideration of environmental issues alongside the need for sustainable economic development and the aim of creating genuinely sustainable communities.

There is also stronger emphasis on good design, reflecting the importance that the Government attach to ensuring high quality design is delivered through the planning system. PPS1 makes clear that good design is indivisible from good planning in delivering safe, inclusive and successful communities. Spatial planning and the importance of ensuring community involvement in the planning system are other important issues covered by PPS1, within the context of the overall theme of the document.

The original PPG1 also contained a broad range of material covering the general operation of the planning system. This was reproduced in a slightly updated form as Annex B in the consultation draft of PPS1. Given the new emphasis of PPS1 on sustainable development, we do not consider that this material suitable for inclusion in the PPS. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is, however, publishing this material in the interim as a separate document entitled, "The Planning System: General Principles", alongside PPS1. We are also considering the scope and content of future "good practice" guidance to support PPS1.

PPS1 demonstrates the Government's commitment to achieving more sustainable development through the reformed planning system. It provides an important, over-arching policy framework which should help improve people's lives and the places where they live, work and enjoy, whilst protecting our environment and natural resources—now and in the future. The Government believe this document should be broadly welcomed by planning authorities, developers and other business, community and environmental interests.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Educational Psychologists

The Minister for Children, Young People and Families (Margaret Hodge): The Department has facilitated discussions involving a range of partners, including the Local Government Association, on possible ways of streamlining the entry training route for educational psychologists (EPs). We have also commissioned two consultancy reports. The discussions to date have been positive but the expensive changes to the training route for EPs proposed do not provide a viable solution in present circumstances. The wider context for the work of EPs has also changed considerably over the last year.

We need to work with stakeholders to clarify future demand, and to assess how that demand can best be met. We therefore propose to commission a fundamental review of the functions of EPs in the context of wider discussions on children's workforce issues.

Building on the report of the educational psychology working group published in 2000, we envisage the review will consider the key functions of EPs in the changing landscape of children's services, identifying the value they add through their particular, distinctive contribution; advise on linkages with other groups; and consider implications for training and development within existing resources.

Precise terms of reference for the review will be agreed with the local authority employers' side and we expect the bulk of the work to be completed in 2005.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Self-Defence

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Following my statement on 12 January, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) have today published a joint statement entitled "Householders and the use of force against intruders". This contains a clear explanation of the law and also explains how the police and CPS would handle the investigation and how they would treat the householder. I am placing a copy in the Library of the House.

The CPS and ACPO will be ensuring this guidance is widely available and the Home Office are wording with them in promulgating it.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Economic Damage (Animal Research)

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In July 2004, in the paper "Animal Welfare, Human Rights—Protecting People from Animal Rights Extremists", the Government announced that they were considering the possibility of making it an offence to cause economic damage to the suppliers of firms or research groups engaged in the legitimate and licensed use of animals for research purposes. Since then the Government have consulted industry and other groups in developing proposals.

The Government intend to table amendments to the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, before the report stage of the Bill, scheduled for 7 February. These will create two new offences, interference with contractual relationships so as to harm an animal research organisation, and intimidation of persons connected with animal research organisations.

TRANSPORT

Sustainable Distribution Fund

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Mr Tony McNulty): The Government set out last July, in its White Paper "The Future of Transport", our intention to move towards a mode-neutral basis for distributing funding in support of sustainable distribution.

I am today announcing details of the arrangements we will be putting into place over the next three years to move towards this new approach.

In recent years the Government have funded programmes whose objective is to minimise the impact of freight on the environment, safety and other transport users. The two main programmes are rail and water freight grants, which aim to transfer freight traffic from the roads to these modes. In the last few years we have also funded some programmes to promote more efficient road haulage.

These programmes currently have separate budgets and are administered separately. But they all have the same objective, to secure the benefits of reduced pollution and congestion and better safety. It is not the principal objective of these schemes to promote certain modes of transport for their own sake.

The Government believe it is right to assess its investments according to the outcomes, so that funding can be directed where it offers the best value for money. This is why we will be bringing together the different budgets mentioned above into a single pot and prioritising expenditure on a value for money basis. The new merged budget will be known as the sustainable distribution fund.

In summary, under the arrangements we will;

Merge the water freight grants and road haulage budget into a single pot from April 2005.

From April 2007 extend the single pot to include rail freight grants. Subject to the passage of the Railways Bill, the administration of rail and water freight grants will be brought together in a single unit as soon as possible.

Prioritise schemes that offer the best value for money in terms of their impact on the environment, safety and congestion.

Set a minimum value for money threshold whereby every pound spent on grants will buy benefits valued at £1.50 or more.

In parallel, use funding from the aggregate levy sustainability fund (ALSF) to minimise the transport impacts of aggregates movements.

Taking 2005–06 and 2006–07 together, a total of £50.4 million will be available for rail freight grants and £19.2 million for water and road freight schemes. The rail figures include an additional £2 million available to support new applications. In 2007–08, when rail freight grants are incorporated into the new arrangements, the total budget for all modes has been provisionally set at £22.6 million. In addition to these figures, there will be some £3 million to £4 million from the ALSF available for sustainable distribution support in each of the next two years.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 2 February 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Draft Children (Contact) and Adoption Bill

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): Following the publication of our consultation response "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities: Next Steps" on 18 January, I am pleased to say that the draft Children (Contact) and Adoption Bill is today being presented to Parliament.

This Bill takes forward the commitment we made in the Green Paper "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities" to provide the courts with more flexible powers to facilitate contact and enforce contact orders.

At present, contact orders can be enforced only through contempt of court proceedings leading to fine or imprisonment. Courts have quite rightly been reluctant to use these measures because of the potential negative impact on the children involved. That is why they need more flexible, more realistic powers, of the sort that this Bill will provide. It will allow the courts, at any stage, to:

> Refer parents to resources including information meetings, meetings with a counsellor, orparenting programmes/classes designed to deal with contact disputes;
>
> Attach conditions to orders which may require attendance at a given class or programme;

And where an order has been breached, the courts will also be able to:

> Impose community-based orders for unpaid work or curfew;
>
> Award financial compensation from one parent to another where the actions of one inbreaching a contact order have caused real financial loss to the other.

In addition, the Bill will provide more clarity in the law about the mechanism by which inter-country adoptions from individual countries may be suspended where there are concerns about child welfare.

I believe that this draft Bill, alongside the wider programme of reform set out in our Green Paper and the response document published on 18 January, will make a real difference to the family justice system in this country, and help provide better outcomes for children and families faced with the difficulties of parental separation.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Embassy (Kinshasa)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Chris Mullin): In light of continuing instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the fragile security situation in Kinshasa, the Government have authorised the deployment of armed guards to our British Embassy in Kinshasa in order to safeguard embassy staff and ensure the mission can continue to operate.

The Government take seriously their obligations to contribute to peace and security in the DRC. We have a development programme for the DRC worth £34 million for the financial year 2004–05. Upgrading the security of our embassy will enable staff to continue to contribute to the peace process in the DRC. The DRC Government have been informed of our intention and is content with the arrangements we propose to protect our staff.

A UN arms embargo, targeting rebel groups operating in the east of the country, has been in place on the DRC since 28 July 2003. An EU embargo has been in place on the country since 7 April 1993. We fully support these measures and have informed the UN DRC Sanctions Committee and EU partners of the deployment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Criminal Records Bureau

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) proposes to introduce measures to reduce the number of organisations currently registered with the CRB, through the setting of an annual threshold for the submission of disclosure applications by registered bodies. At present there are some 13,000 organisations registered with the CRB of which just 20 per cent. process 80 per cent. of all disclosure applications.

Setting an annual threshold will be a key part of the CRB's strategy to enhance the efficiency of, and improve standards within, the registered body network. Those organisations that remain registered will be better equipped to carry out their responsibilities under the CRB code of practice, receiving enhanced support and assistance from the CRB in carrying out their obligations. We shall consult widely with registered bodies and other stakeholders prior to the change.

The CRB and its major stakeholders recognise that public safety and the integrity of the disclosure service relies upon the widespread adoption of robust internal processes by registered bodies, particularly in terms of properly verifying the identity of disclosure applicants, ensuring that eligibility criterion are met, and forms are completed correctly.

The current assurance and compliance regime has highlighted that a significant number of registered bodies do not, for one reason or another, comply with all of the CRB's key guidelines or the CRB code of practice. A more compact registered body network, working in greater partnership with the CRB and composed of high-volume users would allow the CRB to focus its resources more effectively to improve compliance and support the evolving role of registered bodies.

The CRB remains committed to providing appropriate means of access for those organisations that wish to continue to use the disclosure service, and will work with in partnership with low-volume users to find alternative arrangements that best suits their requirements; keeping cost and bureaucracy to a minimum.

The introduction of such a threshold will be subject to a formal consultation process followed by the laying of regulations under sections 120AA and 120ZA Police Act 1997.

PRIME MINISTER

Downing Street Engagements

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today placed in the Library of the House a list of functions hosted by Mrs. Blair in Downing Street between November 1998 and January 2005.

Functions Hosted by Mrs Blair in Downing Street November 1998—January 2005

Date	*Event*
Tue 11/01/2005	Charity—Jewish Women's Aid
Wed 15/12/2004	Charity—Downside Up—Xmas Party
Wed 15/12/2004	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Tue 14/12/2004	Charity Reception John Soanes Museum
Tue 07/12/2004	Charity—Art Depot Trust
Thu 02/12/2004	Lunch—wife of the President of South Korea
Thu 02/12/2004	Charity—Worshipful Company of Feltmakers of London
Tue 23/11/2004	Charity—PACT
Thu 18/11/2004	Reception—Awarding of the Entente Cordiale Cancer Prize together with the wife of the President of France
Thu 18/11/2004	Lunch—with the wife of the President of France
Tue 16/11/2004	Charity—Bristol Cancer Care
Thu 11/11/2004	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 10/11/2004	Charity—Toy Trust
Tue 09/11/2004	Charity—FARA
Wed 03/11/2004	Tea—Children's Champions
Tue 02/11/2004	Charity—Theodoras Trust
Mon 01/11/2004	Charity—Lord Mayor's Appeal
Wed 20/10/2004	Charity—Oxford Children's Hospital
Tue 19/10/2004	Charity—Actionaid
Wed 13/10/2004	Tea—President of Iceland
Tue 12/10/2004	Charity—Turning Point
Tue 05/10/2004	Charity—Samaritans
Thu 23/09/2004	Charity—selection of Charities Mrs Blair supports
Tue 21/09/2004	Charity—Teenage Cancer Trust
Wed 15/09/2004	Charity—DIPIN
Tue 14/09/2004	Charity—Friends United Network
Wed 08/09/2004	Charity—Royal Live Saving Society
Tue 07/09/2004	Charity—Noah's Ark
Tues 31/08/2004	Tea—Prime Minister of Malta + wife
Tue 20/07/2004	Charity—Hope for Children
Tue 13/07/2004	Charity—Hansard Society
Tue 06/07/2004	Charity—Dig Deep Purple
Wed 30/06/2004	Tea—Citizenship Foundation
Tue 29/06/2004	Charity—ParentTalk
Wed 23/06/2004	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 22/06/2004	Charity—CAFOD
Tue 15/06/2004	Charity—LIPA
Tue 15/06/2004	Tea—Leeds Gallery
Wed 19/05/2004	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 18/05/2004	Charity—Norwood
Thu 13/05/2004	Tea—DCMS TASS
Tue 11/05/2004	Charity—MDA
Thu 6/05/2004	Lunch—wife of the President of Poland
Tue 04/05/2004	Charity—Plater College
Tue 27/04/2004	Charity—Harindah Veriah Trust
Wed 21/04/2004	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 20/04/2004	Charity—Mary Ward Legal Centre
Wed 31/03/2004	Charity—British Institute of Comparative Law
Tue 30/03/2004	Charity—Rotary Club of London
Wed 24/03/2004	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 23/03/2004	Charity—Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Tue 16/03/2004	Charity—League of Jewish Women
Tue 09/03/2004	Charity—Pact
Wed 03/03/2004	Charity—History of Parliament Trust
Mon 01/03/2004	Charity—Youngminds
Mon 23/02/2004	Charity—Centrepoint
Tue 17/02/2004	Charity—British Institute for International and Comparative Law
Tue 10/02/2004	Charity—SENSE
Tue 03/02/2004	Charity—Jordan River Village
Tue 27/01/2004	Charity—Seeds for Africa
Tue 20/01/2004	Charity—Liverpool School for the Blind
Tue 13/01/2004	Charity—Cystic Fibrois
Wed 07/01/2004	Charity—MacMillan
Tue 16/12/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 15/12/2003	Charity—International Service
Fri 12/12/2003	Charity—Barnardos Dinner—Chequers
Wed 10/12/2003	Charity—MS Society
Wed 10/12/2003	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Tue 09/12/2003	Charity—Scope Children's' Party
Tue 09/12/2003	Charity—Volunteer Reading Help
Tue 25/11/2003	Charity—Royal College of Surgeons
Thu 20/11/2003	Lunch—Wife of the President of the USA (Mrs Laura Bush)
Wed 19/11/2003	Charity—Body & Soul
Thu 13/11/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 11/11/2003	Charity—The Old Vic
Tue 04/11/2003	Charity—Longford Trust
Tue 28/10/2003	Charity—Lepra
Thu 23/10/2003	Tea—National Families and Parenting Institute
Tue 14/10/2003	Charity—Lord Mayor's Appeal—Save the Children
Wed 08/10/2003	Charity—RAFT
Tue 07/10/2003	Charity—Family Fund Trust
Thu 25/09/2003	Charity—Debra
Wed 10/09/2003	Charity—Bristol Museums Tea
Tue 09/09/2003	Charity—Damilola Taylor Trust
Tue 09/09/2003	Charity—Herinder Veriah Trust
Wed 03/09/2003	Charity—Disability Foundation
Wed 16/07/2003	Charity—International Planned Parenthood Federation
Tue 08/07/2003	Charity—One Family
Thu 03/07/2003	Charity—Jewish Chernobyl Children
Tue 01/07/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 30/06/2003	Charity—Children in Crisis
Thu 26/06/2003	Lunch—wife of the President of Russia
Tue 24/06/2003	Charity—Cliff Richard Tennis Foundation
Mon 23/06/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Thu 19/06/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 17/06/2003	Lunch—wife of the President of Pakistan
Tue 17/06/2003	Charity—Freud Museum
Mon 16/06/2003	Tea—Re-launch of the National Youth Parliament Competition
Tue 10/06/2003	Charity—SOS Sahal
Tue 20/05/2003	Charity—Corinne Burton Trust
Mon 19/05/2003	Charity—Hospitality Action
Tue 13/05/2003	Charity—Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology
Wed 07/05/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 06/05/2003	Charity—emmaus UK

Functions Hosted by Mrs Blair in Downing Street
November 1998—January 2005

Date	*Event*
Tue 29/04/2003	Charity—Mercy Ships
Tue 08/04/2003	Charity—Colon Cancer
Tue 01/04/2003	Charity—Thare Machi The Starfish Initiative
Tue 25/03/2003	Charity—Shado
Mon 24/03/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 18/03/2003	Charity—Lady Taverners
Tue 11/03/2003	Charity—Kisharon
Tue 04/03/2003	Charity—Terence Higgins Trust
Thu 27/02/2003	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 18/02/2003	Charity—Institute for Jewish Policy Research
Mon 10/02/2003	Charity—UK for UNHCR
Tue 04/02/2003	Charity—Grandparents Association
Wed 29/01/2003	Charity—Police Dependants' Trust
Tue 28/01/2003	Tea—Silver Trust
Tue 21/01/2003	Charity Reception—Council for Christians and Jews
Thu 16/01/2003	Charity—Shakespeare Schools Drama Festival
Tue 14/01/2003	Charity—Unicef
Wed 11/12/2002	Tea—Women and Public Appointments Launch
Wed 11/12/2002	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Tue 10/12/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 09/12/2002	Charity—Loomba Trust
Tue 03/12/2002	Charity—Roundhouse
Mon 25/11/2002	Charity—Fabian Society
Mon 18/11/2002	Charity—Prisoners Education Trust
Fri 08/11/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 23/09/2002	Charity Reception—Lord Mayor's Appeal
Tue 17/09/2002	Charity—Inside Out Trust
Tue 10/09/2002	Charity—Sane
Tue 03/09/2002	Charity—Sheffield Museums and Galleries
Mon 22/07/2002	Charity—Sargent Cancer Care
Thu 11/07/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 08/07/2002	Charity—Spouse in the House Club
Thu 04/07/2002	Tea—Motorola Youth Parliament
Wed 03/07/2002	Charity—Endometriosis Society
Tue 25/06/2002	Charity—Down Syndrome Educational Trust
Sat 22/06/2002	Charity Dinner—Chequers Roald Dahl
Wed 19/06/2002	Charity—Canon Collins Educational Trust for Southern Africa
Thu 13/06/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 11/06/2002	Charity—Jubilee Action
Tue 28/05/2002	Charity—Michael Palin Centre for Stammering Children
Mon 27/05/2002	Charity—Family Mediators
Thu 23/05/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 22/05/2002	Charity—Children's Wish Foundation International
Tue 14/05/2002	Charity—Young People with ME
Wed 01/05/2002	Charity—Cord Blood
Thu 25/04/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 23/04/2002	Charity—Sight Savers International
Thu 11/04/2002	Charity—Oxford Philomusica
Tue 19/03/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 12/03/2002	Charity—Prisoners of Conscience
Mon 11/03/2002	Charity—LJMU Hardship Fund
Tue 26/02/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 05/02/2002	Charity—Saving Faces
Mon 04/02/2002	Charity—Donald Dewar Memorial Chair of Social Justice
Wed 30/01/2002	Charity—Guide Dogs for the Blind
Tue 22/01/2002	Charity—Plan International
Mon 21/01/2002	Tea—Charity Launch AEEU Learning Plan
Tue 15/01/2002	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 18/12/2001	Charity—Barnardos
Wed 12/12/2001	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Mon 10/12/2001	Tea—Women in Public Services Launch
Thu 06/12/2001	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 04/12/2001	Charity—Kids
Tue 27/11/2001	Charity—Tuberous Sclerosis
Tue 20/11/2001	Charity—Resource for Autism
Thu 1[illegible]/11/2001	Lunch—wife of the King of Jordan—Queen of Jordan Tea—wife of the President of Romania—Mrs Nastase Tea—wife of the President of Pakistan—Mrs Musharraf
Wed 14/11/2001	Charity—MHA
Thu 08/11/2001	Charity—Kids out
Thu 01/11/2001	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 24/10/2001	Charity—Holocaust Educational Trust
Tue 25/09/2001	Charity—Antaxia Tangliecsta
Wed 19/09/2001	Charity—Tommy's The Baby
Tue 18/09/2001	Tea—TUC Women
Mon 17/09/2001	Charity—Lord Mayor's Appeal
Mon 10/09/2001	Charity—Manchester City Arts
Mon 09/07/2001	Charity—Wyndham Place Charlemagne Trust
Tue 03/07/2001	Charity—The Disability Partnership
Wed 27/06/2001	Charity—Help the Aged
Tue 26/06/2001	Charity—Alzheimers Society
Mon 25/06/2001	Tea—Motorola Youth Parliament
Tue 19/06/2001	Charity—CSV
Thu 14/06/2001	Lunch—wife of the President of South Africa
Wed 13/06/2001	Charity—Spinal Research
Tue 22/05/2001	Charity—Ataxia-Tekengiectasia Society
Fri 20/04/2001	Reception—World Travel Leaders
Thu 05/04/2001	Tea—1951 Women's European Tour
Wed 04/04/2001	Charity—contact a Family
Wed 28/03/2001	Charity—In Aid of the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture's Under-One-Roof Appeal
Wed 14/03/2001	Charity—Variety Club of Great Britain
Mon 12/03/2001	Charity—St John's Hospice
Thu 08/03/2001	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 28/02/2001	Reception—World Women Lawyers Conference
Thu 15/02/2001	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 06/02/2001	Charity—Gingerbread
Thu 25/01/2001	Tea—MPs / Children
Thu 14/12/2000	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 12/12/2000	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Thu 23/11/2000	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 14/11/2000	Charity—National Opera Studio
Wed 08/11/2000	Charity—Bliss
Wed 13/09/2000	Charity—Chronic Disease Research Foundation
Tue 18/07/2000	Reception—American Bar Association
Thu 26/06/2000	Tea—wife of the President of Russia—Mrs Putina
Wed 12/04/2000	Charity—John Grooms Capital Appeal
Mon 10/04/2000	Charity—Chicken Shed Theatre
Thu 30/03/2000	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 27/03/2000	Charity—Denning Centenary Appeal
Wed 22/03/2000	Tea—Whizz Kids Board Meeting
Wed 15/03/2000	Charity—Liverpool John Moores University
Thu 02/03/2000	Charity—RNIB
Wed 01/03/2000	Tea—Community Legal Service
Tue 29/02/2000	Tea—Children/MPs
Thu 24/02/02000	Charity—Roy Castle Lung Foundation
Mon 07/02/2000	Charity—Spouse in the House Club
Tue 25/01/2000	Charity—Home-Start UK

Functions Hosted by Mrs Blair in Downing Street
November 1998—January 2005

Date	*Event*
Mon 17/01/2000	Charity—British Red Cross
Thu 16/12/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 15/12/1999	Tea—Woman's Own Children of Courage award winners
Thu 18/11/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 27/10/1999	Charity—DEBRA
Mon 25/10/1999	Tea—War Widows
Thu 21/10/1999	Lunch—Wife of the President of China
Tue 14/09/1999	Charity—Stroke Association
Thu 29/07/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 21/07/1999	Breakfast—wife of the President of Pakistan
Wed 07/07/1999	Charity—Leuka 2000
Mon 05/07/1999	Charity—UNICEF "World Children's Day"
Wed 23/06/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Thu 24/06/1999	Tea—wife of the Hungarian Prime Minister
Tue 15/06/1999	Tea—Motorola Youth Parliament
Thu 20/05/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Tue 11/05/1999	Charity—St Mary's Hospital, Paddington
Thu 15/04/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Mon 29/03/1999	Tea—Daily Star Gold Award Winners
Wed 10/03/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Thu 28/01/1999	Charity—Media Trust's Community Channel
Thu 28/01/1999	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 09/12/1998	Tea—MPs / Children
Wed 02/12/1998	Charity—Refuge
Wed 18/11/1998	Charity—Shelter

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

National Grid Transco's Gas Distribution Networks

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am taking the earliest opportunity to inform the House of my decision on 27 January to give regulatory consent to National Grid Transco's (NGT) proposed sale of four distribution networks (DN).

NGT announced in 2003 that it was considering the sale of between one and four of its gas distribution networks. In August 2004, it announced that it had reached provisional agreement, subject to regulatory consent, on the sale of four of its DNs.

The DNs are:

North of England;
Wales and the West;
South of England; and
Scotland.

NGT required regulatory consents to proceed with the sale from GEMA (Gas and Electricity Markets Authority, which heads Ofgem, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets) and myself. In considering whether to give consent, we share the same duties under the Gas Act 1986 (as amended). The central duty is to protect the interests of consumers in relation to gas conveyed through pipes, wherever appropriate by promoting effective competition. The legislation confers no powers for GEMA or the Secretary of State to require that consumer benefits should be maximised. GEMA, but not the Secretary of State, has the power to attach conditions to the sale.

Over the last 18 months or so Ofgem has been leading a major exercise within the gas supply industry to design new industry arrangements for managing separate DNs and allocating responsibilities between the players; to identify and manage risks to consumers; and to assess consumer benefits, in order to inform GEMA's decision whether to consent to DN sales. My Department has liaised closely with Ofgem during this exercise.

Ofgem's final impact assessment (IA), published in November 2004, estimates that DN sales would generate a net benefit of £225 million, net present value (NPV) over 18 years (starting from the beginning of the next gas distribution price control in 2008–09) for GB gas consumers connected to the DNs. This includes domestic, commercial and industrial consumers. This is Ofgem's central estimate within a range of £80 million–£500 million. I am informed that, against the experience of comparative regulation in the electricity sector, this reflects a cautious judgement. Ofgem has assessed the benefits of independently owned networks. A greater flow of information about networks will allow Ofgem to compare their performance and thereby to identify the level of costs associated with the most efficient network. Ofgem will then be able to use this information to set more appropriate price controls for each DN.

I have carefully considered the potential impact of DN sales, including the risk of fragmentation on prices and standards of service; on security of supply; and on safety.

Ofgem and NGT have agreed to create an "agency" as a single point of interface between the gas transporters and the shipper/suppliers (wholesale traders) using the gas pipelines. The agency is expected to discharge many of the functions and services which are currently provided by NGT for example, information processing and handling. This would reduce duplication, and hence costs, that would otherwise be faced by shippers.

GEMA has determined the scope of this agency. If changes in the scope are thought necessary by stakeholders, these would be considered by the whole industry and subject to the approval of GEMA. The agency proposals are a key element of the proposed industry framework, and the basis on which the costs to the industry of the DN sales were assessed by Ofgem in its IA.

The main impact on prices would arise from the new opportunity for Ofgem to apply comparative regulation as assessed in their IA. I have already mentioned the savings to consumers from 2008. There are also likely to be one-off costs of £18 million for 2005, substantially less than £1 per consumer and £8 million per annum on-going.

The ability of consumers to change supplier will not be affected. NGT's role in the consumer "switching" process will be placed within the "agency" arrangements. Other standards of service by licensed gas transporters will continue to be regulated by Ofgem.

In the event that NGT do not sell all four of their distribution networks, and there is only one comparator, thereby reducing the opportunity for comparative regulation, Ofgem have required NGT to agree a "safety net", by which NGT (not consumers) would take the risk of a net detriment to consumers.

Security of supply would be maintained. There would be clear responsibilities for operating and investing in the National Transmission System (NTS) and DNs. The new industry arrangements would ensure efficient investment and operation at the interface. This includes market-based signals for pipeline investment at the NTS offtake points and in the DN pipelines, and incentives on Transco and DN operators to respond to these signals.

Safety of the public is paramount. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) are working to ensure that safety will not be jeopardised. The freephone 24-hour national gas emergency service (0800–111–999) operated by Transco will remain unchanged, and will remain seamless to the public who use it. Transco will remain the Network Emergency Co-ordinator for the GB gas network, accountable to the HSE. HSE will ensure that the revisions to Transco's safety case, and the safety cases from the new DN operators, are robust, and that resources are properly prioritised and allocated to safety case verification and inspection. The HSE will also continue to approve and monitor replacement programmes for the population of iron gas mains.

Following the work on the proposed sales, I am satisfied that the longer-term potential savings outweigh any short-term costs. On this basis, on 27 January 2005, I granted regulatory consent for NGT to proceed with the proposed sales. GEMA has also granted consent, subject to a number of conditions, under the same duties.

If the sales proceed, Transco would retain responsibility for the operation of the NTS, and would transfer its four retained DNs into other Group companies.

The sales are expected to take effect on 1 June 2005 and new industry structure is expected to take effect 1 May 2005, subject to processes to modify and transfer appropriate licences, and acceptance of the safety cases by the HSE. GEMA's consent to the sale included relevant conditions.

Ofgem, HSE and DTI will work together in the coming months to ensure a smooth transition to the new industry arrangements.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 3 February 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Courts Boards

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): Section 5(5) of the Courts Act 2003 requires the Lord Chancellor to prepare and issue the courts boards with guidance about their functions. In accordance with this provision the courts boards guidance has been prepared and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor has today placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses.

HEALTH

National Service Framework for Renal Services

The Secretary of State for Health (Dr. John Reid): I am publishing today "The National Service Framework for Renal Services, Part Two: Chronic Kidney Disease, Acute Renal Failure and End of Life Care".

The national service framework (NSF) programme is a major part of our agenda to tackle health inequalities and to drive up the quality of care across the national health service. Part two of this NSF sets out a programme for the prevention and early treatment of chronic kidney disease, the management of acute renal failure and the extension of palliative care to people with established renal failure who are near the end of their lives. Together with part one, which was published in January 2004, it completes a 10-year framework for the improvement of services for people with kidney problems.

This is an important part of our modernisation programme to improve renal services over the next 10 years. Part two sets out four quality requirements to provide a more responsive service for people with kidney problems, delivered when and where they are needed. It identifies 23 markers of good practice drawn from national and international evidence and National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance. It builds on the programme of modernisation set out in the NHS Improvement Plan and is in keeping with our public health White Paper's aspirations to promote healthier lifestyles and reflects the policies of "Shifting the Balance of Power, Building on the Best and National Standards Local Action". Furthermore, it supports previously published national service frameworks for diabetes, for coronary heart disease, for older people and for children.

NHS organisations need to aim to deliver these quality requirements over the next 10 years, at a pace they determine. The four quality requirements in part two of the NSF support self-care, better diagnostics and treatment, as well as choice, and are closely correlated with the public service agreement (PSA) targets for long term conditions, specifically care planning and reducing emergency admissions and for reducing cardiovascular deaths.

The NSF identifies six steps that local health communities can take to support the delivery of local service improvements:

> integrate care pathways by closer links between renal, coronary heart disease and diabetes networks;
>
> identify people at risk of chronic kidney disease and testing their kidney function;
>
> developing protocols for the effective measurement of kidney function, calculating and reporting results automatically by clinical biochemistry laboratories;
>
> take the NSF into account when developing local plans and targets to deliver the PSA targets;
>
> tackle acute renal failure by following NICE guidance on pre-operative testing and closer working between critical care and renal networks;
>
> improve end of life care for people with established renal failure by establishing links between renal and palliative care services.

In addition, five modernisation programmes are being established to support the implementation and delivery of the NSF. Two action-learning sets will tackle issues linked to patient information and the prevention of chronic kidney disease and two others will address problems associated with the extension of palliative care to people with established renal failure who are near the end of their lives. A fifth programme aims to support primary care staff in measuring kidney function.

Copies of "The National Service Framework for Renal Services, Part Two: Chronic Kidney Disease, Acute Renal Failure and End of Life Care" have been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Road Traffic Offences Review

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): I am today publishing a consultation paper setting out the Government's proposals for reform of the framework of offences dealing with bad driving, particularly where death or injury occurs.

Following a comprehensive review, announced by my predecessor, across the whole range of offences the paper puts forward for public consultation a set of proposals, some of them radical. Our aim is to put in place a sensible and effective framework to deal with this area of offending, which causes so much misery to individual victims and their families and which damages our communities at large.

We have made great advances in recent years in reducing deaths and injuries but if we are to continue to improve the safety of our roads we need to ensure that the criminal law plays an effective role. To neglect our duties to other road users by driving dangerously or carelessly so as to cause suffering to others is a serious crime and rightly perceived by the public as such. Too many people are seriously injured as a result and the consequences are all too often fatal. We have already increased the maximum penalty for the causing death offences to 14 years. We now propose a new offence of causing death by careless driving carrying a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment. We also propose an obligation on the courts to take injuries into account when sentencing for bad driving. In order to provide the courts with sufficient powers we also intend to implement the previously recommended increase in the maximum penalty for dangerous driving and aggravated vehicle taking from two to five years imprisonment.

Too many of those who have been disqualified from driving by a court or who drive without an appropriate licence put other road users at risk by taking a vehicle out on the road in clear breach of both the law and their responsibilities to other road users. It is right that a person who takes to the roads unlawfully in this manner should be held accountable for any untoward consequences that may result irrespective of the standard of the driving involved. Accordingly, we are proposing a new offence dealing with the fatal consequences of illegal driving of this kind with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment.

The full proposals are set out in the consultation paper. We believe these should provide a solid and practicable basis for the courts more effectively to address offending of this kind and thereby help make our roads safer for all.

Copies of the consultation paper have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Beagle 2

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): An inquiry was launched on 11 February 2004 by my noble Friend the Minister for Science and Technology and Jean-Jacques Dordain, director general of the European Space Agency (ESA), to investigate the circumstances and possible reasons that prevented completion of the Beagle 2 mission.

The report was always seen by BNSC and ESA as an internal inquiry. Its purpose was to learn lessons for the future. There were also concerns about the confidentiality of commercial information. The organisations involved were given a strong indication that the information they supplied was only for the use of the inquiry.

For these reasons the report was not published. ESA and the UK did however think it right that the recommendations of the report should be published as these covered the most important issues. The Science and Technology Select Committee was also confidentially given a copy of the full report.

Subsequently, in view of the Committee's strongly held view that the report should be published in full, we have discussed the issue again with ESA and have persuaded them that the report should be published. We have also had further discussions with the other organisations involved about now publishing the report and they are aware that the report is being published today. The contents of the report have not been agreed with the parties.

The report of the inquiry is today being placed on the BNSC website at http://www.bnsc.gov.uk/assets/channels/resources/press/report.pdf

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pension Credit

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Alan Johnson): I have today placed in the Library the quarterly progress report on the pension credit campaign, giving the numbers of households receiving pension credit overall, and broken down by guarantee and savings credit by Government office region and parliamentary constituency.

The figures show that there were 2.08 million households or 2.46 million individuals getting pension credit guarantee awards as at 31 December 2004. Definitive national statistics figures on pension credit take up will not be available for some time, but we estimate that that represents take-up in excess of 80 per cent.

As the Pensions Commission have noted, single women pensioners are poorer than single men of the same age, and I am particularly pleased therefore that the figures indicate as many as 90 per cent. of single women pensioners entitled to the guarantee credit are already receiving it.

Mainly as a result of higher than expected numbers taking up their guarantee credit entitlement, pension credit spending is projected to exceed £6 billion in 2004–05—higher than forecast in the last Budget.

The total number of households receiving pension credit at 31 December was 2.65 million, 3.22 million individuals. Between 1 October and 31 December around 30,000 additional households, 40,000 individuals, started to receive pension credit.

The average weekly award is £41.67 and 1.99 million households, 2.41 million individuals, are getting more money than was the case under the minimum income guarantee.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 7 February 2005

DEFENCE

Reserve Forces (Future Use)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): Building on the Defence White Paper "Delivering Security in a Changing World" (Cm 6041-I) and our experience in the use of reserves on operations, the Government are today announcing their vision for the future use of the reserve forces.

In recent years there has been a major strategic evolution in the way we use the reserves. We have moved from a large but little used reserve to a smaller, more effective one. Since 1995, the reserves have consistently provided 10 to 15 per cent. of the UK's manpower in the former Yugoslavia, they have been deployed to Afghanistan and, since January 2003, some 11,000 reservists have been mobilised to support Operation Telic. Our experience of these operations has shown that we need to define clearly the role of the reserve forces against the background of a changing modern world. The "Future Use of the UK's Reserve Forces" clearly spells out, therefore, the roles of the volunteer reserve forces, the regular reserve forces and the sponsored reserves.

In addition we recognise that without an effective three-way partnership between the MOD, reservists and employers, the reserve forces could not function to the best of their capability. The MOD is committed to supporting the development of these relationships and, building upon work already undertaken in this area, is introducing a number of aspirations as a means to strengthen them further. The document outlines our intent with regards to the way in which the reserve forces will be used, including greater voluntary constraints on use than exist within the relevant legislation. While these aspirations will always have to be balanced against operational need, they reflect our acute awareness of the disruption that mobilisation can cause and should reassure reservists and employers alike of our sensitivity to their circumstances. In so doing they also demonstrate our commitment to provide sustainable reserve forces capable of supporting operations into the future.

Copies of the document are being placed in the Library of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Working Holidaymaker Scheme

The Minister for Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Desmond Browne): I am making changes to the working holidaymaker scheme in the context of the five-year plan announced to the House today. The main change for applicants is that we are strengthening the requirement that the work be done in support of holiday and travel intentions. It is anomalous that as a holiday and cultural exchange route it should not have attached to it any conditions that prevent migration based on long-term employment and other economic motives.

To this end we are restricting the total length of time that can be spent in employment under the scheme to 12 months out of a two-year stay. This 12 months in employment can, however, be aggregated in any combination of periods throughout the two years. It will be possible for highly skilled applicants to apply for work permits after 12 months. The ability of the UK to benefit from the skills and qualifications available within this group is therefore maintained. We are also prohibiting the use of this route as a means of bringing professional sports persons to the UK in order not to undermine the work being done to develop our own talented young people.

We are also changing the way in which the scheme itself is administered. In future it will operate on the basis of country-by-country bilateral arrangements. This means that we will be able to vary the arrangements with individual countries in the light of such things as degree of co-operation with our own immigration control and the capacity of our posts overseas to handle large numbers of applications. It therefore becomes a migration scheme to which access can be denied if a country fails to co-operate with our efforts to return their own nationals who have no basis of stay in the UK. However, the new scheme begins with no country being denied such access.

Immigration Rules and administration changes: New Charges

I am also making changes to the arrangements for processing immigration applications. Following on from the Home Office consultation document "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications", I am introducing new fees for a range of immigration applications. I am publishing a summary and analysis of the consultation responses, the supporting regulatory impact assessments and an analysis of the likely impact of the new charges on international student numbers. These documents are available on the Home Office website at: www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

The fees are part of a wider programme of reform—reflected in the five year strategy—to deliver a self-financing managed migration programme by 2008, which reduces reliance on the public purse, and which supports the modernisation of immigration services.

The fees being announced today will save the UK taxpayer in the region of £170 million in 2005–06. The income raised through the charges will benefit customers and the wider public. It will support ongoing investment in the managed migration system in which the public can have confidence; a system that delivers high quality decisions for applicants and tackles abuses quickly and robustly. Moreover, our customers will continue to see improvements in the service they receive. This will build on the modernisation programme already in train and which has seen the introduction of a premium, appointments-based service for people seeking a same-day decision; advertised service standards and performance monitoring; bespoke services for international students; and new methods of making payment for customers' convenience.

The Home Office consultation sought views on a number of proposals for ensuring the provision of managed migration services is fully funded in 2005. The Government are grateful to all those who responded. The proposals included an option requiring those who seek permission to remain in the UK to contribute towards the cost of providing an appeals system for unsuccessful applicants. The Government also sought the public's views on a proposal to require migrants to contribute towards the cost of enforcing the immigration system as part of the application fee.

The consultation responses demonstrated widespread opposition to the proposal to include the costs of enforcement activity in the application fee. The Government were persuaded by the argument that the general public benefit from the effective policing of the immigration service, as well as users of the service. As a result, the costs of enforcing the system have not been included in the application charges. This activity will continue to be funded through general taxation.

In 2005–06, the Government are proposing to recover the costs of running the appeals function for people seeking further leave to remain whilst in the UK through the application fee. Arrangements for family visitor appeals, announced in the five-year strategy, are not affected by this proposal. However, to support implementation of the five-year strategy, the Government are setting up a joint taskforce, with representatives from the education sector and other stakeholders, to review and consider restructuring the charging arrangements for leave to remain, including the funding of the appeals function, in line with cost recovery principles.

International students bring significant economic and social benefits to the UK. In recognition of this, students seeking to vary or extend their conditions of stay in the UK will be charged a reduced fee for postal applications. Our analysis, which is set out in the regulatory impact assessment published today, indicates that at the level proposed, the postal charges were unlikely to have a significant impact on the UK's ability to attract and retain international students. However, in order to ensure that remaining to study in the UK remains a competitive option, we have decided that charges should be at a lower rate of £250 for the standard postal service. The higher, premium fee is an optional service which students can take advantage of if they so choose.

Subject to Parliamentary approval, the following new charges will come into force from April 2005:

Application Type	*Postal Service (£)*	*Premium Service (£)*
Leave to Remain	335	500
Leave to Remain (Immigration Employment Document holders)	335	500
Student Leave to Remain	250	500
Transfer of Leave	160	500
Highly Skilled Migrant Programme	315	—
Sectors Based Scheme	153	—
Travel Documents (CID)	195	—
Child CID	115	—
Travel Documents (CTD)	42	—
Child CTD	25	—
Nationality—ROA	120	—
Nationality—6 (1)	200	—
Nationality—6 (2)	200	—
Nationality—Adult Registration	120	—
Nationality—Minor single and multiple	200	—
Nationality—Renunciation	120	—

Fees for other immigration applications remain unchanged.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

British Soldiers (Prosecutions)

The Solicitor-General (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Attorney-General has made the following ministerial statements, *Official Report*, Lords, 3 February 2005, column WS17, and *Official Report*, Lords, 4 February 2005, column WS 21:

"I undertook in my statement of 14 June 2004, *Official Report*, columns WS22–23 to inform the House by way of written statement when any further charges are laid against soldiers arising from incidents in Iraq.

The Army prosecuting authority has directed that seven individuals should stand trial by court martial for a joint offence of murder and a second joint charge contrary to section 70 of the Army Act of violent disorder contrary to section 2 of the Public Order Act 1986. The matter relates to the death of Mr. Nadhem Abdullah on 11 May 2003 in Al U'Zayra in southern Iraq, following an incident at the roadside. The seven charged with the offence were all members of the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment at the time. The three men who have been directed to stand trial and who can be named are:

Corporal Scott Evans

Private William Nerney

Daniel Harding (now a civilian)

I will give the names of the remaining soldiers by written statement once they have been informed of the charges against them.

No date has yet been set for trial nor a preliminary hearing in this matter."

And;

"Further to my statement of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column WS17, two additional individuals have now been told of the charges they face. They are:

Private Samuel May

of the 3rd Battalion the Parachute Regiment, and former member of the same regiment:

Roberto Di-Gregorio (now a civilian)

The charges relate to an incident which allegedly took place on 11 May 2003 in Al U'Zayra in southern Iraq."

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 8 February 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Greater London Authority (General Grant)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): Further to my previous statement on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 50WS, I announce today that the Greater London authority general grant for 2005–06 has been determined at £37,493,000, after consultation with the Mayor of London.

GLA general grant is a block grant paid for the purposes of the authority and its functional bodies.

I would also like to draw the House's attention to a printing error that occurred in the *Official Report* in my previous statement. The correct figures for the GLA general grant for the following periods are as follows: £37,493,000—2005–06, £37,868,000—2006–07, and £38,243,000—2007–08. I am sorry for any confusion caused.

Firefighter Pensions

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Phil Hope): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has today published a consultation document setting out proposals for new financial arrangements for firefighter pensions.

The firefighters pension scheme is currently financed on a "pay-as-you-go" system. This means that employees' contributions are paid into fire and rescue authorities' operating accounts from which pensions awards are made. Authorities receive funding from central Government to support pension payments as part of formula grant.

The current system for financing firefighter pensions can cause volatility in pension expenditure as a result of lump-sum retirement payments. It can also be difficult to establish what proportion of budget and council tax increases is the result of rising pension costs as opposed to the cost of running the service. Further, over time the forecast growth in pension costs would see pension expenditure rise as a proportion of authorities' budgets.

The new financial arrangements we are proposing are based on employer contributions and are similar to those used for other unfunded public service pension schemes such as those for teachers, civil servants, NHS staff and the armed forces.

The new arrangements would mean that employee contributions and a new employer's contribution would be paid into a new local pension account, from which pensions payments would be made. Government would make up the shortfall as necessary. At the outset, appropriate adjustments would be made in the level of grant so that neither local nor national taxpayers would be disadvantaged.

The new arrangements would be for both the existing and new firefighter pension schemes, but would have no impact on the terms and conditions of either scheme.

Consulting on these proposals is part of the Government's commitment to review the financial arrangements for firefighter pensions which was made in the 2003 White Paper "Our Fire and Rescue Service" and reiterated in 2004–05 and 2005–06 "Fire and Rescue National Frameworks".

Copies of the consultation document have been sent to fire and rescue service stakeholders, including chief fire officers, chairs of fire and rescue authorities, the LGA and the Fire Pensions Committee. The consultation period will be for twelve weeks and will close on 3 May 2005.

Copies of the 2005–06 "National Framework" are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

Future Aircraft Carrier

The Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon): I announced yesterday the selection of Kellogg Brown and Root (UK) Ltd. (KBR) as the preferred physical integrator for the future aircraft carrier (CVF) project. I am now able to provide further details.

The CVF alliance is based on best practice for the delivery of complex and major programmes in the commercial sector, including construction, oil and gas. Construction of the two biggest warships ever built in the UK is a massively complex project and a formidable challenge for British industry in both technical and managerial terms. Previous investigations have shown that no single company or shipbuilding facility in the UK has the skills or capacity to build the two ships on its own. The carriers will therefore need to be constructed at a number of different sites before transportation to a final integration facility; building and integrating them represents a major challenge which requires special project management skills. In discussion with our current alliance participants, BAE Systems and Thales UK, it was agreed that there was a need to appoint a company—as a risk-bearing member of the alliance—to strengthen our approach and introduce innovation to the manufacturing phase. This role has been termed the physical integrator (PI).

We will develop the precise role and responsibility of the PI in consultation with all alliance participants over the coming months—an approach that is consistent with alliancing best practice where each participant's work scope is agreed by the alliance to ensure that work is allocated to the company best able to deliver it in the most cost-effective manner. In broad terms, however, we anticipate that the preferred PI will be involved in developing the build strategy for the carriers.

We put in place a robust competitive exercise to select the preferred PI. A shortlist was produced of candidate companies likely to have the necessary skills and experience to undertake the PI role—Alstom Marine, AMEC, BAE Systems Naval Ships, Bechtel (UK), Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. and Vosper Thornycroft. The requests for proposals issued to the companies in September 2004 set out our general requirements, the submission process and the evaluation criteria. A robust process was used to evaluate the proposals submitted. Each company was required to demonstrate its competence in a wide variety of areas including: successful delivery of projects that had demanding time, cost and performance targets; an ability to innovate to ensure that all opportunities for greater value for money could be addressed; and to demonstrate a breadth and depth of capability and capacity to manage complex programmes.

The result of the evaluation determined that Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. was the strongest candidate. Kellogg Brown and Root is an established UK-based company which has demonstrated a proven track record of delivering bespoke, geographically spread and logistically complex construction projects; it also has experience of delivering UK MOD projects such as CONLOG, the heavy equipment transporters and temporarily deployable accommodation that were successfully used during Operation Telic. Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. will also bring extensive experience of alliances from other sectors including oil and gas and infrastructure.

CVF represents a vast programme of work and overall should create or sustain up to 10,000 jobs in the UK. Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. is likely to build up to a 50–60 strong team during the assessment phase, largely comprising existing members of that company who have off-shore experience. No final decision has been taken on build strategy but we still anticipate that, subject to value for money, the carriers will potentially be built by a combination of the four shipyards named in January 2003— BAE Systems naval ships at Govan, VT at Portsmouth, Swan Hunter on Tyneside and Babcock BBS at Rosyth. We would stress that decisions relating to the build strategy will be taken by the PI and the alliance as a whole—including BAE and Thales UK—with the customer i.e. the Ministry of Defence retaining a final veto.

Bringing the preferred PI into the CVF alliance before the main investment decision is a sensible de-risking measure that will facilitate the formulation of the optimum approach to the ship build of the carriers. Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. will liaise with other alliance participants and work with all potential shipyards and other manufacturing facilities to propose a cost-effective approach to the manufacture of the vessels. This strategy will need to be agreed by all alliance participants including, ultimately, the Ministry of Defence. The MOD, as client, will retain the right to have the final say on all work allocation and selection decisions. Like all other alliance participants, Kellogg Brown and Root Ltd. will need to demonstrate satisfactory performance and appropriate alliancing behaviour throughout its appointment. We will now discuss the scope and value with the company before awarding an initial contract to KBR for assessment phase work, which is expected to be of a value of around £5 million. This represents a firm commitment to the alliance approach for delivering the carriers and is an important step forward both for the programme and the CVF alliance.

We will continue to engage with our industrial participants over the coming months as we meld the PI role into the alliance, and the detailed role and responsibilities of all parties are agreed. We are confident that this is the correct decision and remain committed to the alliance approach, which represents the best route for providing our armed forces with the equipment promised to them by our target in-service dates of 2012 and 2015. We also remain fully committed to an approach which delivers maximum benefits for UK industry.

HEALTH

Food Standards Agency (Annual Report 2003–04)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Miss Melanie Johnson): The Food Standard Agency's annual report and accounts 2003–04 was laid before Parliament today.

Copies will be placed in the Library.

Care Services (Regulatory Fees)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): Increased fees for registration and inspection will be charged by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Healthcare Commission from April 2005. These are set out in the table. The fees for CSCI are subject to an across-the-board increase of 20 per cent. over 2004–05 levels. The fees for the Healthcare Commission are subject to variable increases for different services: registration fees are subject to an across-the- board increase of 50 per cent. increases in inspection fees range from 20 per cent. to 55 per cent. over 2004–05 levels.

It is the Government's firm policy that we should move to a position where the recurrent costs of providing regulation are fully recovered from service providers. The fee increases for 2005–06 are part of this process.

The Government are tackling the issue of how much regulation costs overall, and this will ultimately limit what providers will pay in future. We are also working with the inspectorates to ensure regulatory services are provided as cost effectively as possible and working with public commissioners of care to ensure they understand regulatory costs are a legitimate part of the cost of providing care and need to be reflected in fees.

Individual letters are being sent to all providers of care services regulated by CSCI and the Healthcare Commission to notify them about the increases.

Fees for Registration and Inspection 2005–06 (2004–05 in brackets)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Service	*Provider Registration*	*Manager Registration*	*Minor Variation*	*Variation requiring visit*
Care homes	£1,901 (£1584)	£518 (£432)	£86 (£72)	£950 (£792)
Small care homes and adult placement carers	£518 (£432)	N/a	£86 (£72)	£518 (£432)
Children's homes	£1,901 (£1584)	£518 (£432)	£86 (£72)	£950 (£792)
Small children's homes	£518 (£432)	N/a	£86 (£72)	£518 (£432)

Fees for Registration and Inspection 2005–06 (2004–05 in brackets)

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Service	*Provider Registration*	*Manager Registration*	*Minor Variation*	*Variation requiring visit*
Residential family centres	£1,584 (£1320)	£432 (£360)	£72 (£60)	£792 (£660)
Small residential family centres	£432 (£360)	N/a	£72 (£ 60)	£432 (£360)
Domiciliary care agencies	£1,584 (£1320)	£432 (£360)	£72 (£60)	£ 792 (£660)
Small domiciliary care agencies	£432 (£360)	N/a	£72 (£60)	£432 (£360)
Nurses agencies	£1,584 (£1320)	£432 (£360)	£72 (£60)	£792 (£660)
Small nurses agencies	£432 (£360)	N/a	£72 (£60)	£432 (£360)
Voluntary adoption agencies principal office and branches	£1,320 (£1,100)	N/a	£60 (£50)	£660 (£550)
VAAs with small principal office or branch	£360 (£300)	N/a	£60 (£50)	£360 (£300)
Adult Placement Schemes	£1,901 (£1,584)	£518 (£432)	£86 (£72)	£950 (£792)
Small Adult Placement Schemes	£518 (£432)	N/a	£86 (£72)	£518 (£432)

Annual Fees

Service	*Flat rate*	*Approved Place from 4th-29th*	*Approved place over 30th*
Care homes	£259 (£216)	£ 86 (£72)	£86 (£72)
Small care homes and adult placements	£173 (£144)	N/a	N/a
Children's homes	£864 (£720)	£86 (£72)	£86 (£72)
Small children's homes	£864 (£720)	N/a	N/a
Boarding schools and FE	£432 (£360)	£ 6 (£21.60)	£13 (£10.80)
Residential special schools	£691 (£576)	£69 (£57.60)	£35 (£28.80)
Residential family centres	£576 (£480)	£72 (£60)	£72 (£60)
Domiciliary care agencies	£1,080 (£900)	N/a	N/a
Small domiciliary care agencies	£540 (£450)	N/a	N/a
Nurses agencies	£720 (£600)	N/a	N/a
Small nurses agencies	£360 (£300)	N/a	N/a
Voluntary adoption agencies	£600 (£500)	N/a	N/a
VAA branches	£600 (£500)	N/a	N/a
Small voluntary adoption agencies	£300 (£250)	N/a	N/a
Small VAA branches	£300 (£250)	N/a	N/a
Adult Placement Schemes	£1,728 (£1,440)	N/a	N/a
Small Adult Placement Schemes	£864 (£720)	N/a	N/a

Healthcare Commission

Service	*New Fee*
Provider Registration	£2,376 (£1,584)
Provider Registration (small establishments)	£648 (£432)
Manager Registration	£648 (£432)
Variation requiring visit	£1,188 (£792)
Variation requiring visit (small establishments)	£648 (£432)
Minor variation	£108 (£72)

Annual Fees

Service	*Flat rate*	*Approved place from 4th-29th*	*Approved place over 30th*
Hospices	£259 (£216)	£86	£86
Acute hospital or Mental Health hospital	£5,580 (£3,600)	£223	£112
Hospital using prescribed techniques or prescribed technology	£1,566 (£1,080)	£209	£104
Hospital providing listed services	£1,944 (£1,440)	£194	£97
Independent clinic or independent medical agency	£1,944 (£1,440)	N/a	N/a

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 9 February 2005

DEFENCE

Project ISOLUS

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): The Ministry of Defence has today responded to the recommendations that arose from the public consultation to consider the outline proposals from industry for the interim storage of radioactive material from decommissioned and defuelled nuclear powered submarines under Project ISOLUS. The response, which reflects the thoughts of other Government Departments and devolved administrations, considers each of the 50 consultation recommendations and provides a broad, common theme overview. It is available on the Department's ISOLUS website and the Lancaster university website, and copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

The consultation that gave rise to the recommendations was carried out between September and December 2003 by the Centre for the Study of Environmental Change at Lancaster University on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. I am very grateful for the work that the University carried out on our behalf, and I would particularly like to thank those members of the public and stakeholders for their contribution.

We undertook to listen to what they said and our response reflects this. In particular, we recognise that future ISOLUS considerations of potential interim storage sites should closely align with the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) deliberations on options for a long-term radioactive waste management solution for the UK, which are expected to be available to Government in 2006. Accordingly, no further work will be carried out under Project ISOLUS on the potential interim storage sites already named or to identify other potential interim storage sites, until CoRWM has made its recommendations to Government.

In the meantime, work under ISOLUS will concentrate on technical studies aimed at identifying and assessing the various options for dismantling submarine hulls and isolating the irradiated metal.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Tsunami

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I would like to update the House on the United Kingdom's response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that has taken some 290,000 lives. All Members of the House will wish to express once more their sincere condolences to the families of those who have lost their lives, and to all those who have suffered injury and continue to suffer in the aftermath of this disaster, both here in the UK and in the region.

On 6 and 7 January, I was in Indonesia and saw the devastation first hand. Homes, agricultural land, fishing fleets, businesses and jobs were destroyed along the coast for some 300 to 400 kilometres. Basic public services had largely collapsed. The population was deeply traumatized. The following day, I visited Batticaloa on the east coast of Sri Lanka, where I visited a school building housing over 1,000 people. Most had lost some or all of their family. Along the coastline brick buildings, two layers thick, had been flattened. I met crews from the Royal Navy ships Chatham and Diligence, who had been pumping out wells polluted by seawater, putting up tents and clearing rubble. Despite the enormity of the tragedy and the immense challenge before them, the determination shown by Government, local officials and relief organizations in both Indonesia and Sri Lanka, and the region more widely, was exceptional.

In Indonesia, the reported number of deaths, including missing, is 237,071. 617,000 people have been displaced, of whom 416,438 are located in 66 camps in Aceh province. 127,300 houses have been completely destroyed and a further 151,000 suffered over 50 per cent. damage.

Immediate relief needs are being met; but we must continue to guard against the outbreak of disease, provide shelter and ensure continued access to affected areas. The coordination and distribution of aid have steadily improved and the emphasis is now moving from the use of military to civilian capacity. Planning for recovery and reconstruction programmes has already begun.

The United Nations is assessing needs in terms of shelter and restoring people's means of earning a living. A measles vaccination campaign covering 78,000 children is under way; and an early warning health surveillance system has been established for Aceh Province, in the north-west of Sumatra. The World Health Organisation reports no serious outbreaks of disease. The United Nations are also setting up nutrition surveillance for 790,000 people requiring continuing food assistance.

In Sri Lanka, there were 30,974 reported deaths and 5,637 people are missing. 23,176 people suffered injury. 553,287 people have been displaced of whom 141,985 are in 315 camps. The relief effort is phasing down as the focus moves to recovery programmes, although some pockets of need persist. The number of displaced camps in schools has decreased from 169 to 153.

We welcome the continuing ceasefire in Sri Lanka and hope that all parties will work together following the disaster. It would be a tribute to those who died or suffered loss if some lasting good came of this tragedy. We welcome the Sri Lankan President's commitment to ensure that all affected areas of the country will be treated equally in the relief effort. During my visit to Sri Lanka, I met local government officials and Members of Parliament and stressed the importance of ensuring assistance gets to all those in need. DFID officials have met regularly with Sri Lankan Government officials about the needs and priorities for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and continue to monitor the situation. DFID's assistance has been reaching both

Tamil and Singhalese areas in proportion to their needs. The United Nations has commented that the relief effort in Tamil areas has been impressive.

The number of dead in India is reported as 16,389. 647,599 people were displaced. On the Indian mainland, the relief effort is now complete and support to affected populations is in the recovery stage. We are assisting a number of non-governmental organisations to provide shelter and help restore people's means of earning a living.

In the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, temporary shelter is being provided while permanent housing plans are worked out. There are 10,842 people in camps. Little Andaman suffered extensive damage. A non-governmental organisation Coordinating Committee has been established and aid groups are preparing support.

There were 82 deaths and 26 missing reported in the Maldives. 21,663 people were displaced. In the Maldives, recovery programmes are under way. Following an assessment, we are helping displaced people by providing equipment to help build shelter and two landing craft to speed up access to the many islands in the Archipelago. International volunteer doctors are supporting the country's health services. Vaccines have been delivered for the first round of 2005 Expanded Programme of Immunisation campaigns for all children up to two years old. The World Food Programme indicates that 29,000 people would benefit from food assistance until employment schemes begin.

Of the other affected countries in the region, Thailand suffered 5,393 deaths and a further 3,071 are missing; Burma 61 deaths and 10 missing; and Malaysia 68 deaths and 12 missing. Burma also has 3,200 displaced people. These nations did not seek international assistance. Seychelles and Somalia were also affected. The Seychelles did not suffer many casualties but has experienced substantial damage to infrastructure and to private housing. The Government and other national agencies have taken steps to assist those who were affected and support is also being provided through the United Nations Flash Appeal. In Somalia, reports suggest that around 150 people died and 18,000 households were directly affected. Humanitarian agencies already in the country responded quickly to provide immediate assistance. The United Nations and the Somali Emergency Disaster Response Group are leading the relief effort.

Since first news of the disaster on 26 December 2004, a massive international relief effort has been under way. I would like to pay tribute to the extraordinary generosity of the British people. The response to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal has been magnificent. The sums raised will benefit many thousands of those affected for years to come. DFID has maintained close contact with the DEC and other non-governmental organizations throughout the past six weeks and we will work with them so that the funds available are used effectively.

DFID has already allocated some £50 million of the £75 million to specific activities in support of the relief effort. On the first day, we dispatched our own assessment team to the affected area as well as providing experts for the United Nations assessment and coordination teams. The following day, we sent the first of a series of relief flights, taking tents and tarpaulins to Sri Lanka. Every day since has brought more money and help. Worldwide, the United Nations reports that up to £2.14 billion has been pledged to help those in need. Its Flash appeal for $977 million is already 93 per cent. covered. We have pledged £40 million to this appeal.

The UK's immediate assistance helped to provide food, shelter, medical care, water and proper sanitation, and we are now helping to establish recovery programmes. The relief phase in most places is well resourced and under control. We have supported United Nations agencies, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, international and local non-governmental organisations, and we have given direct help to address urgent needs identified by the affected governments or the United Nations. We have provided a range of logistical assets, including equipment, vehicles, airlift capacity and helicopters to help deliver assistance. This included crucial support to Indonesia, the Maldives and Sri Lanka by the British military, using naval ships and RAF aeroplanes. Full details of the support we are providing are reported on the DFID website at www.dfid.gov.uk.

The European Commission responded promptly to the Indian Ocean disaster, immediately releasing £2 million. They have now allocated over £84 million to support the relief effort. The United Kingdom's share of this commitment is over £14 million.

It is clear there has to be an Indian Ocean early warning system. On 19 January, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development attended the World Disaster Reduction Conference in Kobe, Japan, which discussed the setting up of a global warning system covering all natural hazards, and all countries by June 2007. The Association of South East Asian Nations agreed at a ministerial meeting on 28–29 January in Thailand that the countries in the region should lead on establishing an early warning system and that the system should warn against tropical storms as well as tsunamis. The United Nations will lead on coordination and UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission on the early warning mechanism. The European Commission has committed £1.4 million to this project.

In addition to the immediate relief, the Government will also make a significant contribution to the longer-term reconstruction and rehabilitation of the regions devastated by the tsunami. We will follow the lead of the governments concerned in order to ensure that our contribution is part of a properly coordinated and effective reconstruction plan. We are therefore waiting until the governments have finalised their assessments of what will be required, which they are putting together with the support of the World Bank. Our main concern will be to ensure that assistance meets the basic needs of poor people and restores their means of earning a living. We will use our position as G8 and later European Union President to ensure that the governments concerned have the support and funding that they need in building a better future for all those who were affected by this terrible disaster.

Finally, I wish to pay tribute to all those individuals in DFID and in other Government Departments, and in the large number of UK relief agencies, for their dedication, professionalism and commitment in responding to this terrible tragedy.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

BNFL (US Nuclear Clean-up Contracts)

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Yesterday the DTI and BNFL reached an agreement with the US Department of Energy (DoE) on BNFL Inc.'s loss-making contracts at the East Tennessee technology park and the advanced mixed waste treatment plant in Idaho.

Under the terms of the deal the Idaho facility will transfer from BNFL Inc. to US DoE ownership in May and is subject to BNFL Inc. meeting a number of preconditions, which the board are confident of achieving. Agreement has also been reached on a defined date for the completion of the East Tennessee contract and the expedited settlement of numerous outstanding claims on both contracts. As a result BNFL Inc. will receive between $500 million and $550 million from DoE once the Idaho facility transfers.

The deal provides real benefits to both BNFL and DoE. In addition to the immediate cash receipts, BNFL will eliminate its considerable exposure to further losses on these contracts while DoE will be able to pursue its overall clean-up programme more effectively. Both sides have avoided a protracted, costly and uncertain legal dispute over the outstanding claims.

The agreement also enables the fulfilment of one of the main recommendations of the 2003 joint strategy review of BNFL (the results of which I announced to the House on 11 December 2003, *Official Report*, columns 92–93WS). The elimination of the ongoing risk will enable BNFL Inc. to refocus on pursuing lower-risk opportunities in line with that strategy. BNFL Inc. is a wholly owned US subsidiary of BNFL.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 10 February 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Public Bodies' Database

The Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. David Miliband): I am pleased to announce that today the Cabinet Office is launching its new "Public Bodies' Database", to replace the previous annual publication. It can be found on the Civil Service website at:

http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf

The database lists the public bodies sponsored by central government, with contact details, information about their remit and about the membership of their boards. The figures are broken down between male and female members for individual bodies, and summaries are provided at departmental level for the proportions of board members who have declared they have a disability or come from a minority ethnic background.

The database also includes information about the government's taskforces, ad-hoc advisory groups and reviews, giving a more complete picture of the bodies and groups working to deliver the Government's objectives.

Initially it contains data as at 31 March 2004, consistent with previous years' publications. A selection of statistical reports is available now, and enhanced reports will become available in due course. Users who wish to print out an individual record will be able to do so using standard internet print facilities. We will place a complete printout of the database contents in the parliamentary Libraries as soon as the full range of data is available and validated; and make a portable document format (.pdf) file of that available for public download from the website.

TREASURY

Finance Bill Measures

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): The Government are taking action which will be effective from today to prevent tax avoidance by companies in three areas:

claims to excessive double taxation relief;

use by companies of capital redemption bonds to generate artificial losses;

exploitation of the loss buying rules.

Double Taxation Relief

A recent decision by the special commissioners on the detailed application of the double taxation rules has the effect of putting a significant amount of tax at risk. The Government are taking action from today to ensure that tax is not lost through avoidance schemes that would seek to exploit the decision. Today's announcement will only apply to those who take part in deliberate tax avoidance. This action will not affect those who conduct their affairs on normal commercial principles.

From today, tax avoidance schemes that are put in place deliberately to create foreign tax credits to reduce total tax liabilities will be blocked. The amount of credit for any foreign tax paid on or after today's date will be limited to the amount of UK tax on the profits (if any) arising from the transactions making up the avoidance scheme.

Corporate Capital Redemption bonds

A number of avoidance schemes have been disclosed to the Inland Revenue which aim to generate capital losses using corporate capital redemption bonds. From today, where one of these bonds is disposed of by a company, no capital loss can arise.

Loss Buying

Further disclosures under the new disclosure rules introduced in the Finance Act 2004 mean that the Government will close a loophole which allows certain losses to be carried forward despite the obvious intention of Parliament that they should not be. From today, where there is a change in ownership of a company that would otherwise cause the loss buying rules to operate, any non-trading loss on debt allocated to the period ending before the change will not be carried forward to a post-change period.

Legislation will be included in the Finance Bill to stop these avoidance schemes. Further details about each of the proposals and draft clauses which cover corporate capital redemption bonds and the loss buying changes are available on the Inland Revenue website.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Election Expenses

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Christopher Leslie): The Government have laid before Parliament the following instrument:

The Representation of the People (Variation of Limits of Candidates' Elections Expenses) Order 2005

This order reflects The Electoral Commission's recommendations of 12 January 2005 on the maximum amounts of candidates' election expenses at a parliamentary general election in the United Kingdom and at local government elections in England and Wales, as detailed in their report: "Variation of election expenses limits for candidates at UK parliamentary and local government elections".

The recommendations have been agreed by both the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and the First Secretary of State in respect of their separate and distinct responsibilities for electoral matters. The Department for Constitutional Affairs broadly takes responsibility for national issues, in particular parliamentary and European parliamentary elections. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister broadly takes responsibility for local election matters.

DEFENCE

War Pensions (Gulf Veterans)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): At Defence Questions on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 354, I announced that the Ministry of Defence would investigate the rejections of war pension cases referred to by Lord Lloyd of Berwick in his report into Gulf veterans' illnesses which was published on 17 November 2004.

One of the recommendations referred to: "Some 272 claimants who have had their claims rejected [and] should have those claims reviewed in the light of this report". Of these cases, more than half related to diagnosed disorders such as traumatic physical injuries, low back pain, or coronary disease which we would expect to find in any group of service personnel and which certainly do not relate to anything that might be construed as a "Gulf war illness". This investigation therefore concentrated on the remaining 100 or so cases that may or do relate to Gulf veterans' illnesses.

This work is now complete and revealed some form of irregularity in six of the 110 cases. Otherwise, procedures on claims, reviews and appeals have been properly followed, and the outcomes reflect the evidence and contemporary understanding, and would not have been affected by subsequent developments in the understanding of symptoms and illnesses occurring amongst Gulf veterans. In considering the rate of irregularities, account needs to be taken of the complexity of many claims from Gulf veterans, often involving multiple conditions or symptoms and repeated requests for the addition of further conditions.

One involved a procedural error, involving failure to implement a decision that the individual was suffering from an illness attributable to service in the Gulf. Arrangements are being made to pay the arrears as soon as is practicable.

One claim was wrongly rejected.

In the other four cases the claim was only partly answered—the decisions made did not cover the full range of conditions and symptoms claimed, all of which related to service in the Gulf.

In all these cases, the relevant decisions are being formally reviewed and will be notified to the claimant, with an appropriate notice of award or rejection. Any decision taken on review will carry a full right of appeal.

I am today placing copies of this report in the Library of the House. It is also being placed on Ministry of Defence websites at:

www.veteransagency.mod.uk and www.gulfwar.mod.uk

National Employer Advisory Board

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Ivor Caplin): Following an open competition which attracted a strong field of applicants, I am pleased to advise the House of the appointment of eight new members and the reappointment of two members to the National Employer Advisory Board (NEAB).

The new members are:

Mr. David Amos
Viscount Brookeborough
Mr. David Frost
Mr. John Hazelwood
Miss Delva Patman
Mr. Gordon Scott
Dr. Bill Speirs
Mr. David Yeandle

The reappointments are:

Mrs. Susan Anderson
Mr. Hew Balfour

They join the other five members of the board, which is chaired by the noble Lord Glenarthur, and which continues to provide appropriate support in conjunction with the SaBRE campaign to reservists and their employers. I take this opportunity to thank NEAB for its work which is very much appreciated by the Ministry of Defence.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Rateable Value Limit (Small Businesses)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): One of the consequences of the 2005 non-domestic rate revaluation, which comes into effect on 1 April, is that certain thresholds linked to rateable value limits also have to be raised so that small businesses are not disadvantaged.

I am therefore announcing today that we intend to raise the annual rateable value limit below which the owners of small businesses can serve blight notices and claim other types of compulsory purchase compensation. The limit was previously raised to £24,600 at the time of the 2000 revaluation, and it will now be raised to £29,200 from 1 April 2005. This reflects the changes in rateable values between 2000 and 2005, so that businesses that are currently eligible to serve a blight notice will continue to be able to do so when the new rating lists come into effect.

The same threshold also applies for businesses claiming compensation for loss of value under part I of the Land Compensation Act 1973 when their premises are affected by physical factors such as noise, vibration, fumes and artificial lighting from new public works such as highways and aerodromes.

This threshold also applies under the 1973 Act to enable proprietors aged at least 60 to claim disturbance compensation on the basis of the total extinguishment of their business when they are subject to a compulsory purchase order. This allows claimants of that age to retire if they do not want to re-establish their business elsewhere.

The statutory instrument necessary to achieve the change to the rateable value limit will be laid before Parliament shortly, in order for it to come into force on 1 April.

Decisions and Fees Timetable

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Keith Hill): I have made the 4th commencement order to commence powers in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and today laid the Town and Country Planning (Timetable for Decisions) (England) Order 2005. Yesterday I laid amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations 1989.

The commencement order commences the timetabling provisions contained in section 55 of the Act. Schedule 2 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to make timetables for called-in planning applications and planning appeals recovered for his decision, and enables him to specify decisions, or descriptions of decisions, to which a timetable is not to apply.

The order clarifies the range of cases which will require the Secretary of State to set a timetable for issuing a decision. This will provide a greater degree of certainty for developers, local authorities and all those involved in planning decisions, as to when the Secretary of State will make a decision. The order will come into force on 1 April 2005, and will apply to cases where an inquiry or hearing closed on or after that date, or where a site visit was held after that date.

I am also introducing a draft instrument to implement increases to planning fees. This instrument makes amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Fees for Applications and Deemed Applications) Regulations 1989, which are themselves made under section 303 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The instrument has been laid under the affirmative resolution and will be debated in both Houses, subject to approval the changes will take effect from 1 April 2005.

The Government's purpose in bringing forward this instrument is that fees should rise to provide sufficient financial resources for the planning service and to meet more fully the costs of handling planning applications. The increases will be across the board, but will be higher for the largest applications. A fee for a householder extension will rise from £110 to £135, while the maximum fee for a major development of houses will increase from £11,000 to £50,000. These increases are based on independent research carried out by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which established that the costs of determining planning applications were considerably higher than existing fees.

Temporary Stop Notice

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Yvette Cooper): My right hon. Friend the Minister for Housing and Planning has made the 4th Commencement Order to bring into force provisions in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and the Town and Country Planning (Temporary Stop Notice) (England) Regulations 2005 which have been laid before Parliament today.

The commencement order includes the temporary stop notice (TSN) provisions contained in section 52 of the Act. The TSN regulations have been subject to consultation.

The Act gives local planning authorities a new power to issue a TSN when unauthorised development commences to require the immediate cessation of a breach of planning control for a limited period of 28 days. TSNs can be used to impose a freeze on further unauthorised development. This will help to speed up the process of enforcement. TSNs provide local planning authorities with an additional enforcement tool to deal with a range of planning breaches.

The effect of the TSN regulations is to provide that those in caravans should be treated in the same way as those in buildings under normal circumstances. They can also be used exceptionally, where the risk of harm is so great as to require the immediate removal of caravans from the land.

The TSN Regulations will come into force on 7 March the same day as section 52 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. We shall also publish a circular setting out more detailed guidance on the use of the temporary stop notice provisions, and the circumstances in which they can be used.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Draft Bill

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): As the next major step in delivering the radical reforms set out in the Government's rural strategy 2004, a draft Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill has been published today. Copies are available in the Vote Office and the Libraries of the House.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Assets Recovery Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Caroline Flint): I am announcing today amended guidance to the director of the Assets Recovery Agency which came into being as a result of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002.

Under the Proceeds of Crime Act the director must exercise her functions in the way which she considers is best calculated to contribute to the reduction of crime. In considering this, she must have regards to guidance given to her by me. The guidance to the director broadly sets out the way in which the agency must operate. This includes a set "hierarchy" in the way the different schemes for recovering the proceeds of crime interrelate; pursuing criminal conviction first with a consequential confiscation order, if that is not possible considering civil recovery, and if that is not viable, pursuing taxation proceedings. This refers equally to both investigations and proceedings.

The guidance guarantees that civil recovery and taxation will not become an easy option for the Assets Recovery Agency to pursue at the expense of criminal prosecution. Criminal investigations and proceedings remain the prime focus and objective.

However, the fact that the agency cannot commence any investigation into civil recovery until prosecution is ruled out has a detrimental effect on their operational capability and hinders their effectiveness in reducing crime. This is because the period of time between being able to apply the different schemes is one in which assets can be can be dissipated before the scheme is able to be enforced. This defeats the purpose of the Act and Government to recover the proceeds of crime. An example of the benefit would be in high risk prosecutions, where ARA are presently precluded any civil recovery action until the prosecution has failed, with the consequent risk of assets coming out of criminal restraint and being dissipated before they can begin civil recovery action.

The guidance is therefore amended to allow the Assets Recovery Agency to pursue civil recovery or taxation investigations in parallel with criminal investigations and proceedings. This will ensure that, where necessary, civil recovery or taxation proceedings can commence immediately after a criminal matter has concluded. The priority will remain criminal prosecution and investigation in the first instance. However the Assets Recovery Agency would become more effective at reducing crime and removing the proceeds of criminality if they were able to operate under the proposed guidance. I would add that my hon. and learned friend the Attorney-General, has been consulted, through the legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, and is content with the proposed amendments to the guidance.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Guyana Floods

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas): Unprecedented rainfall in the last two months has caused serious flooding in large areas of Guyana's coastal regions. Rainfall for the first two weeks of January was five times the normal monthly average. Some 39 per cent. of the population of Guyana are estimated to have been affected. The worst affected area is along the East Coast from Mahaica to Georgetown, where 172,020 people have been severely affected. Reports indicate 27 deaths associated with the flooding to date, but there are no fully reliable figures at this time. It would be surprising if the figure remained this low— aside from the risk of more flooding we must be prepared for very serious health challenges as the waters recede.

The Government's civil defence/emergency stocks had been exhausted through Guyana's assistance to Grenada (following Hurricane Ivan) and not replenished. Given the scale of the disaster, the Government have responded as well as could be expected in the circumstances. Systematic assessments of the population's needs are underway by the UN and civil society. These should establish prioritised needs and a division of responsibility around who can fund and deliver relief against these needs. This process should also improve quality of information on the extent and impact of the disaster.

The Government have responded to the emergency by setting up temporary shelter in schools and other public buildings, as well as providing food and potable water. Currently, there are about 1,695 people living in 17 shelters. The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that 3,200 families are in need of food. WFP's food supplies can provide food to 2,000 families for one month. The remaining 1,200 families are being covered from other sources, but supplies to these families are not as secure over the longer term. Evacuation points have been identified, and at least three, which are already established military camps, will not need much to get them operational. However, it is not clear how many people these camps could take.

DFID's immediate bilateral support was to provide £20,000 directly to the Government's relief effort. We also provided £80,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for their delivery of emergency supplies, including water and environmental sanitation (WES) kits, and survival items such as blankets and treated mosquito nets.

I spoke to President Jagdeo on the 27 January 2005, and expressed our support for the Government and people of Guyana at this trying time. On 31 January, I approved an increase of our bilateral contribution from this initial £100,000 by a further £180,000. This provided £120,000 for the deployment of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) rapid response team of six boats and 20 crew and personnel. They arrived in Guyana on Wednesday 2 February and will help ease the problems in distribution highlighted in the available assessment reports. We will also supply £57,000 to support the Pan American Health Organisation's (PAHO) water and sanitation action plans, which will achieve security of water quality for up to 195,000 people (35,000 households). The Pan American Health Organisation will also be tackling the problem of the disposal of human waste. On 8 February 2005, the United Nations launched a flash appeal for Guyana of approximately £1.6 million. DFID will continue to assess whether there is a case for further support to the relief effort, specifically in the areas of water and sanitation, and public health. We have budgeted a small amount—£10,000—for strengthening relief co-ordination.

The EU Delegation has announced the release of a total of €1.7million to the relief effort. €700,000 from European Development Fund resources; €500,000 to Oxfam for water and sanitation work and €200,000 to the Pan American Health Organisation for medical supplies and emergency health assistance (the UK's share of EDF is calculated at 12.7 per cent. giving a total here of £61,163). €1 million has been provided from the General Budget.: €650,000 for the International Federation of the Red Cross for food including the cost of transport; €350,000 yet to be allocated, (the UK's share of the EU's budget funds is calculated at 18 per cent. giving a total here of £123,839). In all, the UK has provided 185,002 to the emergency in Guyana through the EU.

In addition to our humanitarian relief, the President asked for DFID's help in reorienting the Government's programmes with the international financial institutions to deal with long term needs for infrastructure rehabilitation and livelihood recovery schemes. Once the immediate emergency has passed, DFID will liaise with the Government of Guyana and its international partners on these matters. Flood-impact on rice and sugar crops will have implications for growth, debt and poverty reduction in Guyana. A team from the World Bank has just completed its initial assessment and expects to circulate a report on 15 February 2005. The UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the

Caribbean (ECLAC), will provide a more detailed assessment of the socio-economic impact of the floods by early March.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Paramilitary Activity (IMC Report)

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Paul Murphy): On 3 February 2004 I received a report from the independent monitoring commission (IMC), made under articles 4 and 7 of the international agreement that established the commission.

The report covers the robbery at the headquarters of the Northern Bank in Belfast on 20 December 2004 and puts it into the context of what the commission believes are related incidents. It was submitted to the British and Irish Governments under article 4c of the agreement, which enables the commission to report on an ad hoc basis. Having considered the contents of the report, I am today putting it before Parliament and I have placed copies in the Libraries of both Houses.

The IMC report concludes that the Northern Bank robbery was planned and undertaken by the Provisional IRA. The commission also concludes that PIRA was responsible for a number of other robberies which are listed in the report.

The IMC concludes that Sinn Fein must bear its share of responsibility for the incidents mentioned in the report.

The commission has said that if the Northern Ireland Assembly was now sitting, they would be recommending the implementation of the full range of measures referred to in the relevant legislation including the exclusion of members of Sinn Fein from holding political office. In the context of suspension they recommend that I should consider exercising the powers I have to apply financial penalties to Sinn Fein.

I am grateful to the commission for their timely submission of this report and for its careful analysis. I shall now consider carefully the commission's recommendations. I plan to make a further statement to the House in the week of 21 February.

TRANSPORT

Rail Spending

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): In the "Future of Transport" White Paper published in July, (Cm 6233, available from the House of Commons Library), we set out how the Government will respond to the factors that shape travel over the long-term, and the resources being made available to support its strategy.

The 2004 spending review settlement has provided the Department with almost £15 billion to spend on the railways over its three year period. This is an increase of £1.9 billion over previously published plans, averaging at 15 per cent. per year.

This statement sets out how the Department for Transport intends to allocate this money on the railways until April 2009, which is the end of the current control period for rail.

Department for Transport (all figures £m at cash prices)

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*
Government Support to Franchises	1,066	1,501	1,353	1,417
Network Grant	1,843	2,883	2,832	2,651
Enhancements[1]	33	18	27	34
Freight	22	26	21	20
Other[2]	206	201	175	177
Total Government commitments to franchise support, Network Rail and other	3,170	4,629	4,408	4,299
CTRL	1,387	1,181	180	93
Total Rail	4,557	5,810	4,588	4,392

[1] This reflects the enhancements that are directly funded on a 'pay-as-you-go' basis by DfT/SRA, as opposed to those enhancements that are funded through Network Rail.

[2] Expenditure on Other includes, inter alia, support for Merseyrail, rail pensions, the British Transport Police, research and project development, as well as running costs currently incurred by the SRA.

The above figures include funds which will be transferred to the Scottish Executive for rail spending in Scotland, details of which were provided by the Minister for Transport in his written Statement to the House on 27 January 2005.

The balance between Network Grant and Government Support to Franchises is not precisely fixed and will be subject to ORR approval. The result of any ORR approval to any increased enhancement expenditure by Network Rail will be to increase their level of borrowing.

As can be seen, Government commitments to the passenger railway are significantly higher after 2005–06, owing to increases in Network Grant and support to franchises. This largely reflects trends in Network Rail income and the increased investment now going into the railway coupled with the significant decreases in the amount of new borrowing by Network Rail.

Funding for CTRL reflects the profile of our payments under the contracts with the CTRL promoter.

Our spend will enable the Government to deliver their commitments to complete a broad range of plans. These include the completion of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, and through Network Rail, the modernisation of the West Coast Main Line. We will also complete the Mark I rolling stock replacement programme which is bringing some 2,000 new vehicles on to the network.

The spending review outcome allows the Department to support the regulator's interim review funding for Network Rail, (published in December 2003 and March 2004, available from the House of Commons Library), as shown in the following table:

Network Rail (all figures £m at cash prices)[2]

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*
Source of funds				
Network Grant	1,843	2,883	2,832	2,651
Access Charges	1,553	2,584	2,687	2,927
Other Income	401	372	400	420
Total	3,797	5,839	5,919	5,998
Additional borrowing (repayment)	3,108	446	333	(13)
Total source of funds	6,905	6,285	6,252	5,985
Application of funds				
Operations and Maintenance[1]	2,505	2,396	2,317	2,243

Network Rail (all figures £m at cash prices)[2]

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*
Interest on borrowing	1,075	1,179	1,201	1,211
Renewals	2,897	2,389	2,465	2,287
Enhancements	428	321	269	244
Total application of funds	6,905	6,285	6,252	5,985

[1] Includes performance payments.

[2] DfT analysis based on ORR Interim Review.

The balance between Network Grant and Access Charges is not precisely fixed and will be subject to ORR approval. The result of any ORR approval to any increased enhancement expenditure by Network Rail will be to increase their level of borrowing.

These figures show Network Rail progressing towards much greater financial stability. In particular, its need for additional borrowing will decline dramatically in 2006–07 and continue to reduce until the end of the current control period.

Network Rail is funded through Network Grant, paid direct by Government; access charges paid for use of the network by private train and freight operating companies; and other income from activities such as property and retail. In the current year it is forecast that 47 per cent. of Network Rail funding will be from the Public Sector, and 53 per cent. from the Private Sector (44 per cent. from train operating companies and 9 per cent. other income, including freight access charges).

Network Rail also has the capacity to borrow. As at September 2004 Network Rail reported a net debt of £14.3 billion.

The interim review by the rail regulator, and supported by the Government's spending plans, ties Network Rail into achieving efficiency savings of some 30 per cent. by 2009. Nevertheless, its plans for the four year period in the above table include the replacement of 3,360 km of rail, the renewal of 2,900 km of sleepers and the reduction of train delay minutes by 26 per cent.

The Government's plans provide the best opportunity in a generation to achieve a stable and sustainable funding position for the national railway. In particular, they see rapid investment by Network Rail on infrastructure renewal and investment, delivering on a range of planned projects, improving reliability, and putting right decades of neglect on the basis of properly funded proposals.

Realising this stability in the medium term will require careful control of costs, particularly over the coming spending review period. In addition to the 30 per cent. efficiency savings, Network Rail will need to retain a focus first and foremost on the renewal and modernisation of the existing network and demonstrate its improved efficiency before looking at any wide-ranging enhancement programmes. Efficiencies will be required as much on the franchising side as from Network Rail—and the costs of rolling stock remain an important part of the equation.

But, the provisions of the Railways Bill currently passing through Parliament will enable the Government to fulfil its White Paper commitments, delivering better cost control and greater efficiency. The spending review settlement will enable the Government to tackle the decades of underinvestment and put the railways on a secure footing for the future.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 24 January 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 21 and 22 December 2004; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [209495]

Margaret Beckett: My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary and I represented the UK at a meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 21–22 December 2004. Fisheries Ministers from Scotland and Northern Ireland were also present.

The main items for decision were on fisheries. The Council agreed on Total Allowable Catches and quotas for 2005 and on related measures. Much of the discussion at Council centred on the need for further measures to protect depleted cod stocks.

The Commission had proposed a series of closed areas in the North Sea. Ministers, however, were not convinced of the case for the Commission's proposal which would have significant impact on the fishing industry but without clear benefit for the North Sea cod stock. The UK believes that closed areas have a part to play in fisheries management and we indicated at the Council that we would be willing to consider more radical measures, including closed areas, if the scientific advice on the state of stocks justified such an approach.

The Council agreed a general reduction in fishing days within the North Sea, west of Scotland, and Eastern Channel to protect cod stocks. However, in recognition of the role that large mesh gear plays in reducing catches of juvenile fish, the Council agreed that fishermen using mesh of 120 mm mesh should receive an extra day, subject to administrative sanctions for infringements. The UK's mixed cod/haddock/whiting fleet already uses 120 mm and will, therefore continue to be able to fish for 15 days per month as soon as the new arrangements are in place.

The Council also agreed to implement UK proposals for improved controls to ensure that illegal landings do not undermine cod recovery and for scientific monitoring of discarding. The European Commission will present detailed proposals to improve control and enforcement in early 2005.

The Council agreed to apply days at sea limits to the western Channel to protect the sole stock. Fishermen fishing with beam trawls or fixed nets will be restricted to 20 days fishing in the area per month.

Ministers agreed that the closure to demersal fishing of an area to the West of Scotland (the 'windsock' closure) should continue in the same form as in 2004. For the sixth successive year, there will be a closure on the western Irish Sea in the spring to protect the spawning stock. The UK reached a bilateral agreement with Ireland to take forward a review of the Irish Sea closure with industry participation. Fishermen who spend most of their time in the Irish Sea will receive one additional fishing day (instead of two in 2004) in recognition of the reduction in effort as a result of the closure. The Council also agreed to implement a proposal from the UK, French and Irish industries for a cod spawning closure in the area between south west England and Ireland from January to March. However at the request of Belgium, there will be a derogation for beam trawlers in January.

The UK secured at the Council a number of increases in Total Allowable Catches in commercially important stocks where there was scientific evidence that previous TACs were out of line with the real abundance of the stocks. This meant that fishermen were having to unnecessarily discard catches with no conservation benefit. The stocks concerned were:

	2005 TAC (tonnes)	*Percentage increase*
Western Channel sole	865	188
Western monkfish	25,082	20
Monkfish (North Sea/west of Scotland)	[1]15,000	—
West of Scotland nephrops	12,700	12
Irish Sea nephrops	19,544	12

[1] With the prospect of a further increase with agreement on management measures early in 2005.

The Council also reached agreement on cuts in fishing effort and quotas on deep sea stocks. A closed area will be introduced to protect orange roughy which is thought to be particularly at risk. There will be a review of management arrangements for deep sea stocks in 2005.

The European Commission presented a Communication on simplification of the Common Fisheries Policy and this will be followed by an action plan next year.

On agriculture, the Presidency reported on two conferences that had considered the handling of animal disease outbreaks, including zoonoses (animal diseases transmissible to humans), from both the financial and disease control angles. The Commission indicated that it would be taking forward work in this area with a view to developing a more strategic approach to animal health. I strongly supported this initiative.

The Council held an orientation debate on measures to deal with illegally logged timber imports. I joined a number of delegations in welcoming progress in this area while noting that further work to counter attempts at circumvention of EU controls was needed. I also welcomed the Commission's intention to work closely with interested NGOs on this subject.

The Council endorsed conclusions on the application of cross compliance conditions in the reformed CAP. Member states agreed to review the working of these provisions in the light of further experience.

The Agriculture Commissioner informed the Council of her intention to prepare a paper reflecting on the possibilities for further simplification of the CAP; it will come to the Council towards the end of 2005.

Under other business, Hungary, supported by several producing member states, expressed concern about the protection of geographical indications for wine in the EU/Australia wine agreement.

Sweden sought views from the Commission on its plans for proposals to improve the welfare of farmed livestock and the Commission indicated that further work on pig welfare would be undertaken in 2005 and proposals on broiler and laying hen welfare were also likely.

Over lunch, Ministers discussed the current state of play in the Doha Development Agenda negotiations and Commissioner Fischer Boel reported on her recent contacts with other parties in Geneva.

Air Pollution

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received suggesting a relationship between cancer in under-16s and air pollution. [210203]

Alun Michael: The Department has not received any representations on this subject in the recent past.

However, we are aware that a report has recently been published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health suggesting such a relationship. The report evaluated childhood cancer by linking residence and migration of children who had fatal tumours (who died 1966–80) with emission data from the UK National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory (NAEI) data for 2001.

The Department of Health has advised as follows:

> "The Committee on Carcinogenicity (COC) set up a review of cancer in children at its November 2004 meeting. The Committee has recommended a number of follow-up pieces of work which includes a review of published papers on environmental exposures and childhood leukaemia. The new paper from Professor Knox on childhood leukaemia and air pollutants will be considered as part of this review."

One of the issues the COC will need to consider is the validity of the assessment of exposure for children who died in 1966–80 based on emission maps for the year 2001. The magnitude and location of pollution sources is likely to have changed dramatically between these two periods. For instance, emissions of the two pollutants suggested as posing the greatest risk, 1,3-butadiene and carbon monoxide, declined by 64 per cent. and 50 per cent. respectively between 1990 and 2001.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's strategy is for reducing *(a)* air pollution and *(b)* the impact of air pollution on (i) the environment and (ii) human health. [210204]

Alun Michael: The Government's policies on improving air quality are set out in detail in the "Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland", published in January 2000 and Addendum, published in February 2003. The Strategy includes objectives for the main pollutants of concern to protect people's health and ecosystems and explains the measures that are in place to reduce emissions of harmful pollutants from all sectors, including road transport and industry. Copies are available via the Department's website at www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality.

Animal Welfare Bill

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce legislation to *(a)* stop animal abuse and *(b)* improve the conditions in which animals are transported. [209349]

Mr. Bradshaw: The intention to include an Animal Welfare Bill in the Government's legislative programme was announced in the Queen's Speech. The Bill will provide new protection for captive and domestic animals in England and Wales, and will replace the current legislation—the Protection of Animals Act 1911—which already provides substantial protection against animal abuse.

New EU rules on welfare in transport have recently been published—Council Regulation (EC) No 1/2005 of 22 December on the protection of animals during transport and related operations and amending Directives 64/432/EEC and 93/119/EC and Regulation (EC) No 1255/97, *Official Journal* L 3/1–44 of 5 January 2005.

The UK supported this new Regulation as it contains much to help improve animal welfare in transport, such as improved enforcement of the rules, better protection for horses and new training and authorisation procedures for drivers. The EU Regulation applies from January 2007; with competence certification for drivers and attendants taking effect from January 2008. Until then, we will continue to ensure that animals are transported strictly in accordance with the current rules.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the Animal Welfare Bill. [208369]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Animal Welfare Bill was included in the Queen's Speech and will be introduced and published when the legislative timetable permits.

Beef Exports

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the value of exports of British beef to *(a)* France, *(b)* Italy and *(c)* Germany was in each of the last two years. [209258]

Alun Michael: The following table shows the value of total exports from the UK of beef to France, Italy and Germany for the years 2002 and 2003. This will include re-exports of imported beef. The Overseas Trade Statistics do not separately identify exports of British beef.

UK exports of beef to France, Italy and Germany 2002–03

£ million

Country	*2002*	*2003*	*Total*
France	1.2	0.6	1.8
Italy	0.5	1.4	1.9
Germany	2.4	2.1	4.6
Total	4.1	4.2	8.3

Note:

Totals may not match sum of parts due to rounding.

Source:

HM Customs and Excise. Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, Defra

Bogs

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to complete the UK network of Natura 2000 sites for the habitat type Degraded Raised Bogs Still Capable of Natural Regeneration. [206774]

Mr. Bradshaw: In August 2000 Defra and its Country Agencies initiated a public consultation on 5 sites, chosen for their representation of

> "degraded raised bogs capable of natural restoration",

to be considered as UK contributions to the Natura 2000 network. Three of these sites have now been adopted by the European Commission as Sites of Community Importance.

Consultations on two remaining sites, Bolton Fell Moss and Solway Moss, are still ongoing in light of scientific objections raised about their candidature. A decision will be made regarding the designation of these sites following the outcome of these consultations and bilateral biogeographic discussions with the European Commission regarding the sufficiency of site lists for this habitat and others.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter dated 10 November 2004 from the right hon., Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Carol Denis. [209857]

Alun Michael: The Department has no record of the correspondence referred to by the right hon. Member. If he would like to supply me with a copy I shall ensure he receives a response.

Country Shows

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what rural proofing was made of Home Office Circular No. 13/2000 and its effect upon country shows. [208697]

Alun Michael: Home Office Circular No. 13/2000 was published before November 2000 when the Government published the Rural White Paper 2000 which announced our commitment to rural proof all future policy programmes and initiatives.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Country Landowners Association, *(b)* the Historic Houses Association and *(c)* the National Farmers' Union about the effects of Home Office Circular 13/2000 on country shows. [208698]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and members of the ministerial team meet these organisations and many other on a variety of issues but this issue has not been raised with us formally. Comments made by the CLA have been brought to my attention by one Government MP and one correspondent from the West Midlands. I have informed them both that my right hon. Friend, the Minister for Sport and Tourism and his officials have met representatives from the CLA, the Historic Houses Association and the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations and have concluded that the proposed fees for large events should not cause a problem for country shows. I understand that the CLA has now made a statement to that effect.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 Session, broken down by Act. [206876]

Alun Michael: The following Acts created criminal offences in the 2002–03 Session:

> The Animal Health Act 2002 (c.42) created the offence of deliberately infecting an animal with any one of 15 diseases specified in the Act, including foot and mouth. The schedule created an offence of failing to comply with a restriction notice preventing the use for breeding of sheep that are of a genotype that is susceptible to transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE). The Act also created a number of offences of obstructing or failing to assist inspectors carrying out duties under the Act.
>
> The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c.33) provided powers under part 1 to make offences by regulation for breach of the scheme relating to the borrowing, banking, trading or transfer of landfill allowances.
>
> The Water Act 2003 (c.37) made it an offence under part 1 to fail to comply with a notice served by the Environment Agency requiring work to be carried out on facilities for impounding water or a licence application to be made for unlicensed impounding works.
>
> In addition, where abstraction or impounding takes place without a licence or does not comply with the terms of a licence, the Act made it an offence to fail to comply with an enforcement notice issued by the Environment Agency.
>
> Part 2 created the offence of introducing water to or supplying water from a water undertaker's supply system without being a water undertaker or a licensed supply person.
>
> Under part 3 it is an offence for an owner or manager of a large raised reservoir to fail to prepare a flood plan when required to do so. Part 3 also extended the application of the offence of supplying water unfit for human consumption to apply to persons including employees of the water undertaker and to self-employed people involved with the supply of that water.

During the 2003–04 Session the following Acts created criminal offences:

> The Highways (Obstruction by Body Corporate) Act 2004 (c.29) extended the offence of obstructing a highway under the Highways Act 1980 so that the directors, managers and other officers of a guilty company may also be found guilty of the obstruction.

> The Hunting Act 2004 (c.37) made it an offence under part 1 to hunt a wild mammal with a dog, except in some circumstances such as where the dog is only being used for stalking and flushing out, or to participate in, attend or knowingly facilitate a hare coursing event.
>
> Part 1 also makes it an offence for the owner of a dog to permit it to be used for hunting or hare coursing. Additionally, it made it an offence for the owner of land to allow the land to be entered or used for hunting or hare coursing.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria are used by her Department to determine *(a)* on which satellite television stations advertisements on behalf of her Department or its agencies are screened and *(b)* the frequency of screenings of advertisements. [201308]

Alun Michael: The criteria used for all campaigns are individually assessed to take into account the campaign objectives, the target audience and any specific regional factors.

The media buyers secure the most effective advertising slots to match the brief at the most competitive prices within the budget allocated.

Frequency of screening will depend on a consideration of how many times an audience needs to see the message before it will achieve the desired effect and the size of the audience for any particular television spot.

Travel Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206566]

Alun Michael: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of her Department's staff are based in London. [207962]

Alun Michael: Information on regional distribution of staff as at 1 April 2003 is available in the Libraries of both Houses, and also at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2003_report/index.asp

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution.

Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2005.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the accuracy of the seasonal efficiency of domestic boilers in the UK system for measuring the energy efficiency of domestic heating boilers. [209498]

Mr. Morley: The Seasonal Efficiency of Boilers in the UK (SEDBUK) methodology was developed in close partnership with the heating industry. Its accuracy is principally determined by the laboratory tests defined in European Standards necessary to show compliance with the EU Boiler Efficiency Directive (42/92/EEC). As with any assessment there are uncertainties of measurement and these are estimated to be within ±2½ per cent. The accuracy of the laboratory tests is propagated directly to the SEDBUK figure.

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the Treasury on *(a)* the case for a windfall tax on excessive profits made by oil and gas producers and *(b)* the use of revenues from such a tax to fund a domestic energy efficiency programme; and if she will make a statement. [209653]

Mr. Morley: My officials, ministerial colleagues and I are in regular contact with our HM Treasury counterparts about a range of subjects. Decisions on taxation are of course a matter for my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Environmental Schemes

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the costs to UK companies of parallel participation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the Climate Change Agreement. [209847]

Mr. Morley: The costs of participation in both EU ETS and CCAs have not been estimated. However, the current proposals involving a certain degree of overlap in reporting were a response to industry's concerns that separating the targets between the two schemes would be too difficult. The data required for reporting are essentially the same for the two schemes.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made towards ensuring compatibility of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme and the Climate Change Agreement. [209849]

Mr. Morley: My officials work closely with the industry led Emissions Trading Group to ensure the two schemes can work alongside each other. We have made several changes to the structure of the schemes to reflect their concerns while continuing to ensure that the environmental benefits of the schemes are maintained.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when a decision will be made on the possible exclusion from the first phase of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for companies participating in a Climate Change Agreement. [209862]

Mr. Morley: We are discussing some outstanding issues with the Commission in relation to the UK NAP. Once these are resolved we will be able to issue installation level allocations and make a formal application to the Commission for temporary exclusion for CCA installations. Our revised timetable for the announcement of installation level allocations was published on 23 December, and under this we aim to make an application for temporary exclusion by the end of February. We must then wait for a decision by the Commission.

Fareshare

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* representations she has received from and *(b)* discussions she has had with Fareshare on the (i) Landfill Tax Credit Scheme and (ii) financing of Fareshare's work to distribute supermarket food to the homeless. [209651]

Mr. Morley: The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme (LTCS) was reformed in 2003, as a result of which waste projects are no longer eligible for funding. My Department has been contacted directly by Fareshare, and by others on its behalf, on a number of occasions over the last six months. In response to these representations, we have explained the reasons for the reform of the LTCS and suggested possible alternative sources of Government funding.

Farm Payments

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* farmers and *(b)* contractors are waiting to receive the full amount of compensation due to them following the outbreak of foot and mouth in 2001; and what sum of money that represents. [208075]

Alun Michael: All compensation payable for animals that were compulsorily slaughtered during the FMD epidemic in 2001 has been paid. There are 15 outstanding claims for increased compensation still being considered. The quantum involved will be the subject of arbitration or negotiation in those cases.

Contractors who provided goods, works or services during FMD were paid for doing so. They were not paid 'compensation'.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much of the money granted to the UK by the EU following the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak has been paid to farmers. [208255]

Mr. Bradshaw: The co-financing payment received from the EU Commission was a contribution towards the costs of compensation for compulsorily slaughtered animals that had already been paid to farmers and the costs of disease control operations, e.g. cleansing and disinfection, that had already been met by the UK Government.

Flooding

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether City of York local authority representatives will be allocated a full position on the Regional Flood Defence Committee. [208860]

Mr. Morley: Local authority representation on the Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee (RFDC), as with all other RFDCs, is based upon council tax data for the constituent councils, with seats or part seats allocated accordingly.

Due to the increase in size of the Yorkshire RFDC from 13 to 15 members as a result of a recent review, it was decided that the most equitable distribution of local authority seats on the Yorkshire RFDC was for the City of York to share a seat with North Yorkshire. In addition, North Yorkshire have an individually allocated seat. The sharing of seats is commonplace among RFDCs.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the allocation of funding for flood defence in York. [208861]

Mr. Morley: I understand the Environment Agency is currently undertaking a major strategic study (the River Ouse 'Project Appraisal Guidance (PAG) 2' Study) which will examine the need to provide improved flood protection including to properties in York. The outcome of the draft report is due for public consultation in spring 2005.

The Yorkshire Regional Flood Defence Committee long-term plan (up to 2013–14) has allocated an initial sum of £30 million to implement improvements identified in the strategy. Some of these improvements will benefit York city. A more accurate estimate will only be possible when the results of the final strategy report are released later this year.

Approximately £270,000 will be spent in 2004–05 and in future years, on maintaining and improving the condition of flood defences for the benefit of York. (This work includes grass cutting on banks, controlling vermin and routine maintenance and improvement of the extensive mechanical and electrical equipment which forms part of the flood defences, as well as more extensive repairs to the flood defences as identified in the regular, programmed inspections.)

Extensive improvements have recently been carried out to refurbish the pumps at the Foss Barrier, to repair the flood defences at North Street and to the Clifton Ings barrier bank. The total cost of the works carried out since the floods of autumn 2000 is over £500,000.

Maintenance of and improvements to the flood warning system for York, flood mapping, development control activity, strategic planning and other costs amount to approximately £400,000 to £500,000 per annum, including in 2004–05.

The flood warning service for York is comprehensive and staged. Depending on the projected levels in the River Ouse, different warnings are issued to serve different parts of the city. The Environment Agency's knowledge of the catchment area enables warnings to be provided well in excess of two hours before the actual flooding occurs, thereby allowing recipients to take action to protect their property and possessions.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1001W, on Sellafield flooding, if she will make a statement on the impact on Sellafield of the heavy rain of 9 to 11 January. [209261]

Mr. Morley: I understand from the Environment Agency that Sellafield suffered no flooding from the rivers Calder and Ehen or from the sea as a result of the heavy rain of 9–11 January 2005.

There were some localised problems caused by rainwater and high winds, but the safety and security of the site was maintained at all times.

Roger Casale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action she has taken to update the list of areas at risk from flooding to take account of forecasts by climate change experts; and what proposals on this she has received from the Environment Agency. [209523]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is responsible for flood risk mapping in England. Areas at risk of flooding are shown on the Flood Map on the agency's website. This data are also provided to local planning authorities and others enabling them to make decisions about future development and planning. The Flood Map takes account of the current conditions, and does not show the anticipated effects of future climate change.

The Environment Agency is currently undertaking a scoping study to identify the best way to depict the likely increase in the risk of flooding. A number of options are being considered. The agency anticipate that this scoping will be complete by summer 2005.

Freedom of Information

Matthew Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department were employed to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004; and how many staff are budgeted to deal with Freedom of Information Act 2000 issues in (i) 2005 and (ii) 2006. [205043]

Alun Michael: Until 2004 Defra had no staff working full-time on Freedom of Information. The full-time equivalents of staff in the Access to Information Unit, including those working on the implementation of the Environmental Information Regulations for Defra, in each of the years you mention is approximately as follows:

	Number
(a) 2001	1
(b) 2002	1
(c) 2003	2
(d) 2004	7

That figure has risen to eight in 2005. The budget for 2006 has yet to be determined.

Beyond those staff directly involved in the ongoing implementation and application of FOI within Defra, it is difficult to identify precisely the number of officials who will be dealing with Freedom of Information requests from January 2005 onwards, since it is potentially part of every civil servant's role to respond to Freedom of Information requests.

Fuel Poverty

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the public sector health bodies with which her Department *(a)* has worked and *(b)* is working in order to achieve the Government's statutory fuel poverty targets; what plans her Department has to extend such partnership working; and if she will make a statement. [208194]

Alun Michael: Defra works with the Department of Health to ensure that the issue of fuel poverty is considered in the work of public sector health bodies. Defra has also supported, via National Energy Action, the appointment of a number of primary care trust champions to promote the need to tackle fuel poverty in their local area.

The scheme managers for Defra's Warm Front programme work closely with public health bodies to promote the benefits of the scheme and highlight the role improved energy efficiency plays in tackling fuel poverty.

Landfill

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme. [209741]

Mr. Morley: The 1999 landfill directive sets challenging targets to reduce the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill. These significant reductions need to be properly planned and managed and experience suggests that a steady reduction over a period of years is likely to be the most effective way to achieve the reductions needed.

To help local authorities meet their landfill directive targets the Government will introduce a Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme in England on 1 April 2005. The primary aim of the scheme is to give authorities as much flexibility as possible in reducing the amount of biodegradable municipal waste sent to landfill, while reassuring Government that the necessary progress towards achieving the directive's targets is being made.

The scheme is not intended to inflict major new costs on local authorities not provided for in spending reviews, either by imposing unnecessary penalties or forcing them to take part in trading against their will. It is designed as a tool to help local authorities meet the required reductions in the most cost-effective way and it will allow them to share the burden of meeting the reduction targets.

National Bee Unit

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many colonies of bees are within the workload of each bee inspector; and how many beekeepers each inspector is responsible for in the six months of the year when inspections are undertaken. [208003]

Alun Michael: On average, each inspector visits about 70 beekeepers and inspects about 650 colonies in the course of a season. Inspections are targeted in areas where disease risk and colony density are high. About 10 per cent. of the total number of colonies is inspected each year.

Oil Contamination

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures *(a)* she and *(b)* the Environment Agency is taking to detect sites of land contaminated by oil leaks and spillages; and what programmes exist to treat such sites. [210354]

Mr. Morley: Under Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, introduced in April 2000, responsibility for identifying contaminated land rests with local authorities in accordance with the detailed provisions of the regime. Where contaminated land is designated a "special site", as defined, the Environment Agency becomes the enforcing authority. Remediation is normally undertaken by the "appropriate persons", or at their expense, if necessary through the service of a remediation notice by the enforcing authority.

Rights of Way

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the process for closing alleys or gallies which are designated as rights of way; and how many such closures have been secured since the legislation was last updated. [208838]

Alun Michael: Schedule 6 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 inserted new section 118B into the Highways Act 1980. This enables highway authorities to close rights of way on the grounds of crime prevention in areas designated by the Secretary of State. The first stage of the process is for the relevant highway authority to apply to Defra to have an area designated. If successful, they can then make special extinguishment orders in much the same way as they are currently able to close rights of way for other reasons.

Since the powers came into force in February 2003, 22 applications have been received and considered. As a result 18 extinguishment orders have been made under section 118B. Fifteen of these orders have now been confirmed. Two are awaiting decisions having been referred to the Secretary of State because objections were received and a third is expected shortly following an objection.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish her response to the consultation on the Use of Mechanically Propelled Vehicles on Rights of Way. [210617]

Alun Michael: The response to the consultation, entitled "Use of mechanically propelled vehicles on Rights of Way—The Government's framework for action" was published on 20 January. Copies have been placed in the House Library.

River Itchen

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to facilitate the improvement in the navigability of *(a)* the River Itchen, north of Southampton and *(b)* other rivers in Hampshire; and if she will make a statement. [209561]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has no direct power to facilitate the improvement of navigability of the River Itchen or any other non-navigable river. Those wishing to improve the navigability of non-navigable rivers are free to apply to the Secretary of State for an order for this purpose under the Transport and Works Act 1992. They will be expected to justify their proposals and any objections will be carefully considered.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received about improving the navigability of the Itchen Navigation. [209562]

Mr. Morley: No representations about this subject have been received.

Telephone Usage

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much revenue her Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205848]

Alun Michael: My Department has only one non-geographic 0870 number. Revenue is not collected for its use.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by her Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205838]

Alun Michael: My Department has only one non-geographic 0870 number which is provided for callers to the Pet Travel Scheme Helpline.

Video Conferencing Units

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number. [204110]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

(a) Defra has 43 video conferencing units installed and this covers approximately 30 per cent. of core Defra sites.

(b) Information on agencies is as follows:

RPA has seven units covering 100 per cent. OF RPA sites

VLA has 16 units covering 100 per cent. of VLA sites

CEFAS has four units covering 100 per cent. of CEFAS sites

CSL has one unit at its only site

VMD has one unit at its only site

PSD is located in one building and uses Defra facilities within the same complex

Defra is actively promoting the use of videoconferencing across the Department and additional units will be installed as demand increases.

Warm Front

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Burnley have benefited from Warm Front; how many pensioners have been assisted by the programme; and if she will make a statement. [209050]

Mr. Morley: Since the launch of the Warm Front scheme in June 2000 and the end of December 2004 approximately 4,300 households in Burnley received assistance under Warm Front of which 480 were pensioner households.

Of the total households that have benefited some 1,250 pensioner households received assistance under Warm Front Plus.

Water Infrastructure

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the amount of the *(a)* water supply and *(b)* sewerage infrastructure in England which is in unsatisfactory condition; and what estimate she has made of (i) the cost of necessary repair and maintenance of the infrastructure and (ii) the length of time at current levels of investment to clear the backlog. [208885]

Mr. Morley: In 2003, companies reported to Ofwat the profile of their assets across condition grades 1 (best) to 5 (worst). Around 5 per cent. of water mains, 3 per cent. of critical sewers and 5 per cent. of non-critical sewers were reported in condition grade 5.

Each year the Director General of Water Services (the Director) assesses the trend in serviceability of the water mains and sewers in England and Wales. The assessment is that serviceability is currently stable and Ofwat does not consider there to be a 'backlog' of work.

At the 2004 price review the Director has assumed in price limits that water companies in England and Wales will spend around £1.87 billion on water mains and £1.03 billion on sewers to maintain their assets in the period 2005–10.

Waterways

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what obligations there are on British Waterways to ensure that waterways under its jurisdiction remain navigable; and what action she has undertaken during her Department's current statutory review of British Waterways to ensure that waterways remain navigable. [208167]

Alun Michael: In recent years British Waterways has made considerable progress in reducing a maintenance backlog that had built up over many decades. It has also brought to completion a number of projects to restore derelict waterways to navigation.

Section 105 of the Transport Act 1968 sets out British Waterways' statutory duties for maintaining its commercial and cruising waterways. Subject to these obligations, British Waterways is required by its framework document to operate and maintain its waterways to standards that reflect their use and prospects of use. No decisions arising from the current review of British Waterways have yet been taken.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

African Union Summit

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the proposals for *(a)* humanitarian aid, *(b)* reconstruction aid and *(c)* long-term development aid made during the African Union summit in Gabon with regard to (i) Sudan, (ii) Cote d'Ivoire and (iii) Democratic Republic of the Congo; what assessment his Department has made of the availability of the (A) infrastructure and (B) qualified manpower needed to maximise the efficiency of the implementation of such proposals; and if he will make a statement. [209084]

Hilary Benn: The African Union (AU) Summit in Libreville on 10 January was a meeting of the Peace and Security Council (PSC). As far as I am aware, there were no specific proposals for humanitarian or other development assistance made. The subsequent communiqué set out the Council's position on the situation in Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. DFID's assessment of these is set out as follows:

(I) Sudan

DFID shares the AU's concern regarding the humanitarian situation in Sudan.

DFID concurs with the AU's call for an end to violations of the humanitarian ceasefire as well their call to cease attacks on civilians and humanitarian workers.

DFID supports the call for the right of return of all IDP's and refugees affected by the conflicted, but the UK strongly condemns any forced relocations. The UK Ambassador to Sudan has made representations to the Government of Sudan to adhere to its obligations and commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding on Darfur with the International Organisation for Migration, which prohibits involuntary movement of internally displaced persons.

With the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Abuja Protocols, the UK has worked hard alongside the AU and UN to ensure that there is the political will among the warring parties to allow humanitarian agencies to do their work. Through its direct support of both the AU monitoring mission and United Nations Security Co-ordinator (UNSECOORD) the UK has sought to provide the effective infrastructure and manpower to achieve this. Since April 2003, the UK has allocated £118.5 million on humanitarian operations in Sudan and its Darfur region, as well as £14 million in support of the AU monitoring mission. It is continuing its support for the next financial year with a commitment of £100 million for Sudan of which £50 million is towards the UN Workplan.

(II) Cote d'Ivoire

The United Kingdom is working closely with the countries of the Africa Union and other members of the international community in support of a durable political settlement in Cote d'Ivoire. DFID welcomes the endorsement of President Mbeki's peace plan at the AU Peace and Security Council meeting on 10 January, and we hope that the AU's commitment to peace will encourage all sides to work together to bring about a sustainable peace in the country.

DFID is continuing to monitor the humanitarian situation. During 2004, we provided £1.55 million in humanitarian assistance through international agencies and non-governmental organizations working there.

(III) the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The focus was on how to deal with the continuing tensions between the DRC and Rwanda, rather than a consideration of humanitarian, reconstruction and long-term development issues. The Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) welcome the commitments made by the AU to continue to support the DRC peace process and to work towards improving relations between DRC and Rwanda.

AIDS Aid

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what resources were committed to expenditure on HIV/AIDS in developing countries in 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* bilateral and *(b)* multilateral aid. [209865]

Hilary Benn: Recording accurate expenditure on HIV and AIDS is difficult because of the cross-cutting nature of many HIV and AIDS initiatives and of the range of methods used to channel development assistance, including direct budget support to governments and via multilateral organisations. DFID is currently working on ways to better account for expenditure in this area and revised figures may be issued later in the year. The following are estimated figures for bilateral and multilateral independently.

In 2003–04, DFID's bilateral expenditure on projects that targeted HIV and AIDS, was £297 million. This figure reflects all projects that were recorded as having a primary or significant focus on HIV and AIDS or reproductive health. It should be noted that some of these projects will also have had a primary or significant focus on other sectoral areas such as education or health systems development.

In addition, expenditure which focused on AIDS through multilateral organisations was estimated at £48 million. This is based on the share of spending which multilateral organisations, supported by DFID, said they directed towards AIDS.

The overall spend is likely to be in excess of £345 million, as further money has been spent on AIDS directly by partner governments receiving 'Poverty Reduction Budget Support' (PRBS) from the UK. DFID is currently in the process of developing a methodology for estimating the proportion likely to be spent on HIV and AIDS activities, though this exercise is not yet complete.

Bam Earthquake

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding the Government have *(a)* pledged and *(b)* spent in relief and reconstruction for Bam, Iran, following the earthquake in 2003. [210307]

Hilary Benn: Following the earthquake in Bam, the Department for International Development committed £1,676,640 to support immediate humanitarian needs and rebuild livelihoods. £1,206,640 was channelled through United Nations agencies and non-governmental organisations as financial support.

From the balance, DFID provided 68 search and rescue specialists and four DFID personnel, 450 family winter tents and other shelter materials for distribution by the Iranian Red Crescent as well as two cargo aircraft put at the disposal of the Iranian Government.

In addition, the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office contributed €8.5 million for emergency relief and rehabilitation of which the UK's share was €1.445 million (£1.01 million).

Bangladesh

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* financial, *(b)* material, *(c)* personnel and *(d)* other aid the UK Government (i) pledged and (ii) delivered to Bangladesh after the floods in 2004. [210199]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government allocated £10 million through DFID to meet immediate flood emergency needs following the floods in July 2004. £5 million of this was channelled through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and £5 million through the World Food Programme (WFP). Supporting these two organisations ensured that both food and non-food emergency needs of those affected by the flood were met. This initial £10 million provided food packages of rice, pulses, oil, salt and nutritionally fortified high-energy biscuits; and non-food support, including shelter and agricultural support (such as provision of seedlings) to over 900,000 families (4.5 million people) affected by the floods.

In August the United Nations launched its Consolidated Appeal for $210 million (£117 million) to meet relief and recovery needs for the next 6 months. Again, the UK Government acted swiftly to meet the extensive recovery and rehabilitation needs of Bangladesh. On 18 August, DFID's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State announced an additional £15 million through DFID for Bangladesh to support the repair, replacement and maintenance of roads and bridges; to provide food, shelter, clean water, sanitation, medial supplies; and to provide funds for cash-for-work programmes to give people affected by the floods the opportunity to earn income to help recover from the floods.

From this £15 million, £1 million has been channelled to the World Food Programme to support their provision of food to those affected by the floods. £2 million has been channelled through the UNDP to provide temporary and longer-term shelter to flood affected families, working in partnership with the Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED). Another £4 million has been channelled through the UNDP to support NGO-managed 'cash-for-work' programmes. £2 million has been channelled to the World Health Organisation (WHO) through the UNDP to provide medical supplies to maternal and child welfare centres and urban clinics. £2 million has been channelled through the UNDP to United Nations Children's Fund

(UNCIEF) to work with the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) to restore access to safe water and sanitation facilities. The final £4 million was provided to the Government of Bangladesh's Roads and Highways Department to support their request for emergency financing for roads, bridges and culverts damaged by the recent floods.

A further £4 million was channelled to the World Food Programme's Emergency Response Programme (EMOP) in October 2004. This will enable the poorest flood victims to have continued access to food during the period of scarcity, which has followed the floods.

Staff from the DFID Bangladesh office were extensively involved in responding to the floods in 2004 but no other personnel were involved.

The UK Government expenditure that is channelled through the European Commission and the multilateral development banks has also contributed to the total humanitarian assistance. The European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO) provided $5.3 million through the UN Flash Appeal, $230 million is being provided through the World Bank and $180 million through the Asian Development Bank as loans to the Government of Bangladesh for a post-flood recovery and assistance programmes.

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of people displaced from Karen and Karenni states in Burma in 2004. [209062]

Hilary Benn: Displaced people are among the poorest and most marginalised people in Burma and are often located in areas where DFID or international agencies have little or no access. Therefore reliable statistics on Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from the Karen and Karenni States are unavailable. DFID cannot access these areas freely and have not made an independent assessment on the number of people displaced. However in October 2004, the Thailand Burma Border Consortium (TBBC) estimated that the number of people displaced from their homes in Burma was at least 526,000 in total.

Securing increased access to these vulnerable areas is an important objective of DFID. DFID is currently working with international organisations such as the UN to encourage the Burmese authorities to do this. DFID is currently providing £500,000 to support the International Committee of the Red Cross, who have been gradually increasing their access and are now operating in significant areas of the Eastern Burma.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will reply to the letter dated 22 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Anna Galding and Matilda Chime. [209850]

Hilary Benn: I replied to my right. hon. Friend in my letter of 7 December 2004.

Darfur

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the incidence of malaria in refugee camps in Darfur. [209069]

Hilary Benn: According to the United Nations (UN) Morbidity and Mortality Bulletin, between 22 May and 31 December 2004, there were a total of 168,584 clinically diagnosed Malaria cases, including 319 deaths reported in Darfur. The greatest distribution of cases was reported in West Darfur. The figures are from two thirds of the internally displaced people (IDP) settlements and hospitals in the region, which covers 1.1 million of the conflicted affected population.

The traditional malaria season in Sudan runs from May through to November, and therefore the numbers of reported cases are expected to ease off early into the 2005. Access to internally displaced people, security, and the poor provision of health care facilities in some areas continue to hamper the diagnosis and treatment of malaria cases.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence; [206476]

(2) how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206661]

Hilary Benn: Information in the format requested is not held centrally and cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

The following table gives the costs of official travel and UK hotel accommodation booked through DFID's travel implant. Travel costs incurred by DFID overseas departments and booked through overseas travel agents are not included. All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code. Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code. Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

Travel and hotel payments

	£ million
1998–99	7.5
1999–2000	7.2
2000–01	8.7
2001–02	9.2
2002–03	10.4
2003–04	10.4

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206562]

Hilary Benn: The cost of first class travel in 2003–04 was £77,000. Information on first class travel before that date is not held centrally and cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207677]

Hilary Benn: DFID has records of the following electronic devices:

	Number
Desktop personal computers (worldwide)	3,433
Portable personal computers (worldwide)	1,513
Server computers (worldwide)	540
Handheld computers (worldwide)	834
Mobile phones (UK only)	467
Printers (UK only)	682
Plasma screens (UK only)	43
Video conference units (UK only)	76
Fax machines (UK only)	62

The asset registry is currently being expanded to include printers, screens, video conference units and fax machines at overseas locations. At present, records relating to these types of equipment are only held locally and summary figures are not available without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Mobile phones are purchased locally at each office. The figures show the number of mobile phones on the UK contract. The numbers at each overseas office cannot be provided without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207811]

Hilary Benn: The Freedom of Information Act does not make specific categories of information available, but operates on the presumption that all information held by public authorities should be available, subject to the 24 exemptions of the Act.

Whether or not information is exempt under the Act requires the exercise of judgment in each case. The majority of the exemptions also require that the public interest in releasing the information should be weighed against the public interest in withholding it. If the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in withholding it the information must be disclosed. The assessment of the public interest has to be made in all the circumstances of the case, on a case by case basis as far as each request is concerned. Therefore it is not possible to provide the information requested.

HIV/AIDS Action Programme

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what discussions he is having with *(a)* members of the European Parliament and *(b)* the Council of Ministers to ensure that orphans and vulnerable children are given the necessary priority in the Programme for Action and the new EU Development Policy; [209070]

(2) if he will make representations to EU counterparts that the EU give the same priority to orphans and vulnerable children as the UK in its HIV/AIDS Programme for Action. [209066]

Hilary Benn: Along with other member states, DFID is engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not address orphans and vulnerable children but we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations. Discussions on the new EU Development Policy have only just started. The Commission has produced a "Consultation on the future of EU Development Policy Issues Paper", which includes consideration of the broad themes of "Development of human resources and citizens' rights" and "Combating inequality and promoting social cohesion", both of which are likely to include consideration of orphans and vulnerable children. Consultations with members of the European Parliament and other member states will take place in due course.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent reports he has received on the state of Iraq's health care system; and what action his Department is taking to improve the level of basic health care in Iraq. [208728]

Hilary Benn: Iraqi health care faces enormous and longstanding challenges which pre-date the 2003 conflict. However, the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) has already taken a number of positive steps to strengthen public health services. For example, funding to the health service has increased significantly since April 2003. In addition, through the multi-donor trust funds managed by the United Nations and the World Bank, about $1 billion is available for Iraqi priorities in health and other sectors. Salaries have improved and charges largely abolished, providing free access to health care for all. The Iraqi Ministry of Health, with support from the United Nations, has also developed a set of Planning Guidelines for 2005 which set out national priorities and the objectives and standards that the Ministry expect to achieve.

DFID support is focussed on primary health care, through the provision of professional advice to the Ministry of Health in Baghdad and Basra, and a £5 million grant through the World Health Organisation (WHO). Additional DFID support for health services in Iraq is channelled through the multi-donor trust funds managed by the United Nations and the World Bank. DFID has made an initial contribution of £70 million to these trust funds.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent reports he has received on levels of acute malnutrition amongst Iraqi children up to the age of five years; and what action his Department is taking to reduce levels of child malnutrition in Iraq. [208729]

Hilary Benn: The most recent national survey of nutritional status conducted in Iraq took place in the second quarter of 2004 by the Iraqi Central Office of Statistics and Information Technology, with technical support from the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, Norway. This survey found that 7.5 per cent. of children under five years old were acutely malnourished, defined as low weight for a given height. A UNICEF survey conducted in 2000 found that 6.4 per cent. of children of the same age group were acutely malnourished. Another survey was subsequently conducted in 2002 but it was not nationally representative, and therefore direct comparisons are not valid.

All surveys are subject to a certain amount of imprecision and it is not possible to state whether the apparent increase from 6.4 per cent. to 7.5 per cent. reflects a real trend. General child malnutrition—defined as weight for age—showed a marked improvement over the same period, falling from 17.3 per cent. to 11.7 per cent.

Reducing levels of acute malnutrition means ensuring that adequate supplies of food reach the poorest families whilst also working to tackle poverty and ensure equitable distribution of wealth in the long term. DFID helped to ensure that Iraq's Public Distribution System (PDS) for food was re-established quickly after the conflict in 2003. DFID is now supporting the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) in the development of economic policies which will protect the poorest in Iraq who are dependent on the PDS, whilst reducing the economic distortions created by distributing food, virtually free, to the entire population. The PDS currently accounts for 12.5 per cent. of Iraqi Government expenditure. DFID is also developing a programme aimed at strengthening Iraqi Government capacity to implement pro-poor employment and social protection policies. In addition, DFID programmes in employment generation and political participation are aimed at reducing poverty and ensuring that the needs of the most vulnerable in Iraq are addressed in Government policies.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the numbers of children attending schools in Iraq not receiving a nutritional dinner each day; what percentage of the total number attending school this amounts to; and if he will make a statement. [208730]

Hilary Benn: There are no current data sources available of nutritional content of children's dinners in Iraq. DFID is helping the Iraqi Government in the implementation of pro-poor economic policies designed to reduce poverty across Iraq and ensure adequate social safety nets for those most in need.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research is being conducted on the impact of the war on Iraqi *(a)* health and *(b)* mortality. [209458]

Hilary Benn: The most recent research focusing on health and mortality in Iraq has been published by Medact, a non-governmental organisation, and by *The Lancet*.

The Medact report, published in November 2004, was critical of the Iraqi health system, but recognised that the institutional weaknesses were longstanding and pre-date the 2003 conflict and that the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) was addressing these. Medact also acknowledged that health data on Iraq are patchy, often unreliable and that their consultants were unable to visit Iraq to collect field data due to the security situation. The Iraqi MoH has issued a swift and strong rebuttal of the Medact report.

Improving health services presents major challenges and will take time. Despite security constraints, steady progress is being made, and many more hospitals are now functioning and have better access to medicines. Since the Medact survey was conducted the MoH have produced Planning Guidelines for 2005, with support from donors, to meet these challenges. The UN and World Bank managed multi-donor trust funds provide support to the health sector, focusing on the improvement of emergency and primary health care services, which affect the poorest and most vulnerable. DFID has contributed £70 million to the multi-donor trust funds and has also provided technical assistance to the MoH.

The Lancet article of 29 October 2004, looked at mortality in Iraq. As the Foreign Secretary explained in his written statement to Parliament on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 93WS, the Government believe that the Iraqi authorities remain in the best position to monitor the casualties of their nationals.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the Answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 686–87W, on Iraq, how many families from Fallujah have received the $100 welfare payment; how many households have received the $200 payment from US military forces; how much in welfare payments has been distributed by the Iraqi authorities through banks in the areas where they are living; how much the Department has spent on people displaced from Fallujah; and what provision has been made for the health needs of the residents of Fallujah who have been displaced from the city. [209936]

Hilary Benn: The Iraqi Ministry of Finance has reported that it began to distribute welfare payments of $100 to Fallujan families from seven bank branches on 13 January. Information is not available on how many families have received this payment to date.

US military forces began making payments of $200 to Fallujan families on 13 January. By 19 January they had issued 32,546 payments amounting to approximately $6.5 million. Since the estimated number of Fallujan households is around 36,000, the US military anticipate completing payments soon.

DFID's response to the needs of the people of Fallujah has been through the deployment of advisers to the Iraqi Interim Government on humanitarian, health and coordination issues. One consultant was contracted specifically to work on humanitarian coordination in and around Fallujah. Other DFID staff and consultants, either already in Iraq or assigned from headquarters, also contributed to the effort. The cost of this work is being absorbed within existing programmes. Direct financial support for the people of Fallujah, and for the reconstruction of the city, is being provided largely from Iraqi and United States sources.

The Iraqi Ministry of Health assessed the needs of Fallujah's displaced population and provided additional staff and medical supplies to the clinics and hospitals in the areas where most of those people were living. Fallujah General Hospital and two primary care clinics in Fallujah are open to provide care for people returning to the city.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent by the UK Government on reconstruction in Iraq, in each month since April 2003. [210601]

Hilary Benn: Monthly DFID expenditure on assistance to Iraq since April 2003 has been:

	£
2003	
April	35,098
May	35,937,923
June	11,304,549
July	999,212
August	2,576,931
September	33,754,105
October	2,506,797
November	7,696,857
December	2,396,104
2004	
January	7,182,744
February	6,179,041
March	98,743,354
April	1,487,010
May	2,894,577
June	4,155,992
July	2,437,976
August	4,637,169
September	4,270,838
October	2,549,869
November	6,663,411
December	3,081,410
2005	
January	[1]1,099,965

[1] Up to 20 January

Note:

Months with particularly large expenditures were those in which contributions were made to multilateral organisations.

Total DFID expenditure on assistance to Iraq since April 2003 has been £242,590,932.

Spending by other Government Departments over the same period on activities related to reconstruction in Iraq were:

	£ million
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	38
Ministry of Defence	20
Global Conflict Prevention Pool (joint DFID, FCO and MOD	17

Mozambique

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* financial, *(b)* material, *(c)* personnel and *(d)* other aid the UK Government (i) pledged and (ii) delivered to Mozambique after the 2000 floods. [210380]

Hilary Benn: The UK pledged £26 million at the Rome donor conference held in response to the Government of Mozambique's appeal for assistance following the 2000 floods. Our actual expenditure was £37 million. This was composed of £10 million in additional budgetary assistance to the Government of Mozambique to compensate for revenue losses, £7 million for the reconstruction of the north-south highway and a total of £20 million channelled through United Nations agencies and NGOs to meet a range of emergency needs, including food assistance, helicopter operations, provision of water and sanitation and logistical support. Given the number of projects and agencies involved, providing the detailed breakdown requested would incur a disproportionate cost.

Palestinian Police

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what makes of car have been selected for supply to the Palestinian Police force in the programme funded by the UK; in which country those vehicles were manufactured; and what assessment was made of the options for procurement of vehicles produced in the UK. [209515]

Hilary Benn: The police cars for the Palestinian Authority (PA) police force were selected and bought by the PA in line with their procurement procedures. This included an evaluation of all available vehicles in the market and their suitability and price. The cars selected were Volkswagen Passats, manufactured in Germany and procured through a Palestinian car dealership. DFID's development assistance is fully untied. Choice of vehicle would not be restricted to any make or model but based on value for money and operational requirements in the destination country.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207669]

Hilary Benn: DFID subscribes to the parliamentary TV system to allow access to the parliamentary annunciator system, the Division Bell and Commons and Lords TV channels in the UK. Other services and channels are included in the package: these are selected by the Information Committee of the Houses of Parliament. These additional channels include the pay TV channels: CNN; Sky Sports 1; Sky Sports 2; Sky Sports 3. The annual costs of the subscription since 1997 are:

Annual subscription costs

	£000
1997	no figures are available
1998	19,770
1999	19,770

Annual subscription costs

	£000
2000	20,500
2001	20,500
2002	20,850
2003	[1]20,850
2004	[1]20,850

[1] Estimate figure

DFID has no other pay television subscriptions in the UK and there is no central provision of pay television services to overseas offices. Information about any local purchases overseas could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206522]

Hilary Benn: As at 1 April 2004, DFID employed five press officers, including one chief press officer and four press officers or senior press officers.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Adviser. [207228]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right. hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Sri Lanka

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Sri Lankan Government on equal access of Tamil people to aid. [209589]

Hilary Benn: I visited Sri Lanka on 8 January and met with local government officials and MPs. Officials in the DFID Sri Lanka office are holding regular discussions with government officials concerning the needs, priorities and strategies in relation to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. DFID's humanitarian response has been channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, and non-governmental organisations and in direct in kind interventions aimed at addressing immediate needs. DFID has supported the United Nations in undertaking impact and needs assessments, co-ordination, technical advice and air movements logistics support. The assistance that we have provided, and are supporting, is geographically spread throughout the country. This includes substantial support to Tamil communities in proportion to needs across the country.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209575]

Hilary Benn: DFID spent £714,122 on vacancy advertising in the 2002 calendar year, and £691,937 in the 2003 calendar year.

Tsunami

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development at what time, using Greenwich Mean Time *(a)* he and *(b)* his Department was first informed of the earthquake off Sumatra on 26 December; and when (i) he and (ii) officials in his Department were informed that the earthquake had caused a tsunami. [208789]

Hilary Benn: DFID first became aware of the earthquake at 02.40 (GMT), and was receiving the first reports of flood damage at 06.50. I first became aware of both the earthquake and the consequent tsunami at about 10.00 am.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the money committed by his Department as a result of the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami includes money that will be charged back by the Ministry of Defence for costs related to the use of UK military staff and equipment in relief and support efforts in the area; and if he will make a statement. [209082]

Hilary Benn: In response to the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, the Department for International Development and the Ministry of Defence have an agreement based on marginal costing related to the use of UK military staff and equipment in the relief effort. The costs are agreed in advance and are competitive with commercial rates.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimates his Department have made of the total value of UK Government spending committed following the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami that will be paid to *(a)* other UK Government departments, *(b)* the UN or its agencies, *(c)* non-governmental organisations, *(d)* other national governments and *(e)* other agencies working in the countries affected; and if he will make a statement. [209083]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has committed £75 million towards immediate humanitarian needs. This assistance is being channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement, non-governmental organisations and by DFID direct action. Of this, £40 million has been pledged as the UK contribution to the UN Flash Appeal. Requests for support from non-governmental organisations are still being received and we are continuing our direct action in support of priority needs. DFID estimates that the combined value of these will be about £25 million. The balance is being provided through the Red Cross, local initiatives being considered by DFID Country Offices, and the Ministry of Defence to cover the marginal costs of their operation.

On the bilateral front, DFID is continuing with the implementation of its international development programmes in those countries affected, where it has a bilateral programme. The UK is also providing Gift Aid relief on the money donated by the British public so far, which could be worth some £15 million. In addition to this, our share of the proposed package of up to

€450 million from the European Community budget for immediate and longer-term relief is €90 million (approx. £63 million).

On debt relief, Sri Lanka has been added to the list of countries eligible for the UK's multilateral debt relief initiative. The UK will pay 10 per cent. of its debt service costs to the International Development Association (IDA) which amounts to approximately US $5.5 million in 2005, $5.8 million in 2006 and $6.2 million in 2007.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the sources are of UK financial assistance from public funds to date for the tsunami disaster; and what percentage of the pledged aid *(a)* is from the existing departmental budget and *(b)* he expects will be funded by other Government sources, broken down by source. [209089]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement made by the Prime Minister to the House of Commons on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 24. As the Prime Minister explained, the Government has so far committed £75 million towards the immediate humanitarian response to the Indian Ocean disaster. This has been drawn from *(a)* DFID's humanitarian contingency budget and DFID's central Contingency Reserve (66.7 per cent.) and *(b)* the Treasury's Reserve (33.3 per cent.).

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what lessons his Department has drawn on the deployment of UK search and rescue teams following experience in the South Asian tsunami disaster area. [209318]

Hilary Benn: DFID did not deploy search and rescue teams following the Tsunami as the affected governments did not request UK search and rescue teams.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Indonesian Government about restrictions imposed on aid agencies regarding access to the Aceh region. [209590]

Hilary Benn: The Indonesian Government are concerned for the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers, and has introduced registration procedures. They also offer guidance and police escorts to those wishing to travel to areas where escorts are judged necessary. There have not been any reports of these measures restricting the movement of humanitarian aid, though DFID continues to monitor the situation.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's long-term strategy is for dealing with the aftermath of the tsunami disaster. [209592]

Hilary Benn: In addition to the £75 million already committed for immediate relief and recovery, DFID will make a further contribution to longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. DFID's focus will be on support to rebuilding livelihoods and services for poor people in affected countries. The governments concerned are currently completing needs assessments with the support of the World Bank and others. DFID will consider how we can best channel our support once we have the completed assessments of need.

DFID will work to ensure that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable are taken into account throughout the process of rehabilitation. It will be important that the response of donors and international agencies is co-ordinated properly to ensure effective use of funds and minimum burden on recipient countries. We will work to ensure that the UN relief effort is sustained and that there is a smooth transition from the recovery phase to longer-term rehabilitation.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with tsunami-affected countries on providing training for *(a)* local counsellors for victims suffering from post-traumatic stress and *(b)* local architects in relation to (i) reconstruction programmes and (ii) the design of safer essential buildings. [209593]

Hilary Benn: DFID recognises that psycho-social help is a key need in those countries affected by the tsunami. DFID has committed £2 million to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) for its programme in the region, which includes support to this sector. DFID has also provided £57,933 to the NGO "Basic Needs" for its work in mental health and psycho-social support in Sri Lanka. We are currently considering other funding proposals, which may include further support to psycho-social health.

DFID will work with the governments of the countries affected by the tsunami to ensure that disaster risk reduction measures, including reconstruction programmes and design of safer buildings, are integral to the reconstruction of the devastated areas. These issues are being discussed by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State with representatives of the governments concerned at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction in Kobe, Japan. Reconstruction programmes and design of buildings will naturally involve local architects and they will identify if there is a need for external expertise or training.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with countries affected by the tsunami about the supply of *(a)* field hospitals and *(b)* water purification plants. [209594]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided relief items at the request of affected governments and following assessments of need by humanitarian agencies. DFID did not receive any specific request for field hospitals or water purification plants.

DFID has responded to health needs through support to organisations working in the health sector. Although it is difficult to be precise at this stage, a large proportion of DFID's support has gone to meet health needs, including £3.1 million to the World Health Organisation and additionally to non-governmental organisations including the International Medical Corps (£327,250) and the Mentor Initiative (£897,000). DFID also provided health related relief items, including enough emergency medical supplies to serve two million people for three months.

For water purification, DFID provided 1,000,000 water purification tablets, as well as support to implementing partners working in water and sanitation. This includes £4 million to UNICEF for water and sanitation activities in Indonesia, India the Maldives and Sri Lanka, and £2 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

West African Currency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the Central Bank of the States of West Africa's recent introduction of new currency into *(a)* Benin, *(b)* Burkina Faso, *(c)* Côte d'Ivoire, *(d)* Guinea Bissau, *(e)* Mali, *(f)* Niger, *(g)* Senegal and *(h)* Togo; and if he will make a statement; [209079]

(2) what reports *(a)* he and *(b)* his Department has received on shortcomings in the distribution policy of the Central Bank of the States of West Africa in its recent introduction of new currency into its member states; and if he will make a statement; [209080]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* policy and *(b)* implementation of the policy of the Central Bank of the States of West Africa in its recent introduction of new currency into its member states, with particular reference to access to and distribution of new currency and exchange places in northern Côte d'Ivoire; and if he will make a statement. [209081]

Hilary Benn: DFID is aware of practical difficulties encountered in the currency conversion operation. We understand that these have been recognised, and resulted in an extension of the surrender deadline. DFID has not received any substantive independent reports or assessments of the conversion operation. DFID's bilateral activity and representation in the Franc of the African Financial Community (CFA Franc) zone is modest. DFID contributes to the countries concerned mainly through multilateral donors.

TRANSPORT

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type; [205580]

(2) if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206364]

Charlotte Atkins: The answer to the questions includes the Central Department only and covers the period since the Department was formed on the 29 May 2002. To obtain a full answer including the Executive Agencies and NDPBs would involve disproportionate cost.

The following items have been reported lost or stolen:

	Number
Travel Vouchers	51
Laptop Computers	5
Government Procurement Cards	7
Computer Accessory	1
Building Passes	2

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206873]

Charlotte Atkins: I have placed in the Libraries of the House a list of the criminal offences created in primary legislation sponsored by the Department for Transport in the sessions in question.

Departmen[illegible] Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many there were in each year broken down by *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases and what the costs were of each settlement. [206452]

Charlotte Atkins: The records available to the Department for Transport disclose the following information in respect of legal actions to which the Department (including its Agencies) and its predecessor Departments (in relation to their transport functions) were a party.

The total number of legal actions during the financial years 1997–98 to 2004–05 is 6,522. On these, the Departments have incurred a total sum in respect of legal costs (excluding internal staff costs) of approximately £37.4 million. This figure breaks down on an annual basis as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	3.8
1998–99	5.0
1999–2000	5.1
2000–01	4.9
2001–02	3.5
2002–03	3.9
2003–04	6.1
2004–05	5.1

Information as to the number and costs of actions resulting in court hearings and of settlements could be provided only at disproportionate expense.

Eurostar

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with representatives from Eurostar; and if he will make a statement. [209625]

Mr. McNulty: Ministers and officials meet representatives from Eurostar from time to time and discuss various matters.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209094]

Charlotte Atkins: The information for the central department and its agencies is set out in the following table.

2003–04

Organisation	*Number of contracts for goods, works and services awarded*	*Total value (£)*	*Threshold above which tenders are invited (£)*
DfT(C)	188	70,850,958	[1]25,000
Highways Agency	129	963,655,633	15,000
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	89	28,090,488	10,000
Driving Standards Agency	28	3,199,389	20,000
Marine and Coastguard Agency	186	12,816,000	5,000
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	187	12,467,853	[2]—
Vehicle Certification Agency	1	106,675	15,000
Total	808	1,091,186,996	—

[1] £0 threshold for IT services.

[2] £3,000 for goods, services and consultancy. £15,000 for works.

Flooding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what flood risk analysis was undertaken prior to approval being given for the Carlisle Northern Development Route; and if he will make a statement. [210292]

Charlotte Atkins: The design of the scheme includes a major crossing over the River Eden and its flood plain. This is a 144 metre long two span structure with one span entirely within the flood plain. At this point, the proposed route is on a 9 metre high embankment to carry the road over the river and its flood plain. I understand that scheme designers worked with the Environment Agency in the development of the scheme and the proposed design reflects a number of constraints required by the Agency.

I also understand that the county council are producing a Flood Risk Assessment in support of a planning application to amend conditions in the existing planning consent.

M2

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are for the resurfacing of the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 with noise-reducing material. [210375]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency intends to resurface the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 (Sittingbourne to Faversham) with a quieter surfacing material in the summer/autumn of 2005, subject to funding being available.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209218]

Charlotte Atkins: The Secretary of State and other Ministers carry out frequent engagements both in and outside London and it is occasionally necessary to cancel such engagements for parliamentary or other ministerial business. Details of cancelled engagements could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

New Cars (Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of new cars sold in 2003 emitted less than 100g of carbon dioxide per kilometre; and what projection he has made for the percentages that will be allowed for each year until 2012. [210265]

Mr. Jamieson: The Powering Future Vehicles (PFV) Strategy, published in 2002, sets a challenging target that by 2012 at least 10 per cent. of new cars sold in the UK will have a fuel efficiency of 100g per kilometre of carbon dioxide (100g/km CO_2) or better. We reported progress towards this target in the second annual report on the delivery of the PFV Strategy, published in October 2004. The percentage of new vehicles sold in 2003 emitting less than 100 g/km CO_2 was less than 0.1 per cent., although 3 per cent. of new cars sold emitted less than 120 g/km CO_2—a significant increase on the previous year.

The rate of progress in future years will depend, among other things, on how quickly new technologies are developed and introduced, and on the nature of any further EU-wide targets on new car fuel efficiency. We will monitor the situation closely and keep the existing package of measures under review to ensure that it is delivering the progress required, working closely with stakeholders including the Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership. The scope for new measures will be considered carefully as part of the Review of the Climate Change Programme which is currently under way.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207648]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was established as a separate department on 29 May 2002. Separate expenditure figures for DfT while subsumed within DTLR are not available for previous years. The total expenditure by DfT(C) for the period from formation until 23 December 2004 was £149,000, to the nearest £1,000. This figure can only be split between newspapers and periodicals at disproportionate cost.

With effect from 1 November 2004, ODPM's central publications acquisitions service (which provided a service to DfT) ceased operation and responsibility for purchases transferred to individual Divisions within the Department by ODPM as part of its commitment to greater efficiency. Although expenditure information can still be obtained for the whole Department, information on titles purchased is only available centrally for those titles ordered or on active subscription as at 31 October 2004. The current list has been placed in the Libraries of the House. The list of titles includes those titles taken by ODPM. Extracting listings for individual Departments can be done only at disproportionate cost.

Parking Charges

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether trades vans servicing private houses have been considered for exemption from local authority parking charges; [210148]

(2) what categories of vehicles are exempt from parking fines and charges. [210149]

Charlotte Atkins: Charges and other conditions applying to designated parking spaces will be set out in the relevant traffic authority's parking order for the spaces concerned. Exemptions from charges, for example for permit holders (usually residents) or for emergency services' and statutory undertakers' vehicles when carrying out their duties, may be included, but it is the authority's responsibility to decide what exemptions, if any, are appropriate in each case. We do not hold information centrally on where particular categories of vehicles, including trade vans servicing private houses, have been considered for, or the subject of, such exemptions.

Parking fines or penalty charges are payable where vehicles are parked in contravention of the traffic regulation orders, e.g. yellow lines, or parking order conditions. Again it is for the traffic authority to decide whether exemptions, such as those mentioned above, to any parking restrictions should be provided in the orders. In general, any exceptions would usually be kept to a minimum otherwise they could detract from the purpose for which the restrictions were made and make enforcement more difficult. Vehicles covered by such an exemption in the relevant order would not be liable for a fine or penalty.

Single-hulled Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the risk to the marine environment in (i) the Solent and (ii) other UK coastal waters from single-hulled tankers; and if he will make a statement. [208685]

Mr. Jamieson: I have not commissioned or evaluated any recent research on the risk to the marine environment in UK coastal waters from single hull tankers.

However, the UK has played a key role in both the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the EU in negotiating an acceleration of a programme to phase-out single hull tankers from world trade, while ensuring continuity of energy supply. The IMO has recently agreed to an accelerated programme, under which the large majority of single hull tankers will have been phased out by the end of 2010. Single hull tankers which will be under 25 years of age at the end of 2010 will be allowed to continue in service until the end of 2015, or on reaching age 25 if earlier, but only if they first pass a rigorous assessment of their condition. Based on the IMO agreement, there is a EU Regulation, now in force, which prohibits single hull tankers entering or leaving EU ports and anchorages when carrying heavy grades of oil as cargo.

South Hampshire Rapid Transit Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his timetable is for reaching a conclusion on the re-evaluation of the South Hampshire Rapid Transit project; and if he will make a statement. [208950]

Charlotte Atkins: A revised proposal was received on 25 November 2004. However, further information is required on the appraisal, financing and procurement before the Department can reach a conclusion. The promoters' advise that this necessary documentation will be supplied during March.

St. Pancras

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will approve the fitting-out of St. Pancras Midland Road Station for use by Thameslink train services to enable this station to be opened with St. Pancras International in mid 2007. [209917]

Mr. McNulty: It is our intention to carry out the fitting-out of St. Pancras Midland Road Station. No decision has yet been taken on the exact timing of this work.

Stourport Relief Road

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the future of the Stourport relief road project; [208823]

(2) what funding his Department will make available to build the Stourport relief road. [208824]

Charlotte Atkins: No proposal for major scheme funding for the Stourport relief road project has been received by the Department. It would be for Worcestershire county council to decide whether or not they wish to prepare a scheme proposal and, if so, to include broad details in their next Local Transport Plan (LTP) due to be submitted to the Department in provisional form by July 2005. Schemes submitted for funding under the LTP programme are considered in the light of their performance against our appraisal criteria and available resources. In addition, under the proposals set out in our consultation document "Devolving decision making: A consultation on regional funding allocations", we propose to seek regional advice on the relative priority of major transport proposals in the region on the basis of long term regional funding guidelines.

Train Timetables

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what response his Department has made to representations received regarding the December timetable changes on routes from Paddington to Maidenhead and Twyford. [209949]

Mr. McNulty: The Department's response to representations related to the December 2004 timetable changes is that they deliver wider benefits through improvements to punctuality across the First Great Western and First Great Western Link franchises.

Trams

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are for further tram networks in cities which have poor public transport systems. [209433]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Minister of State on 20 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 693W. Local authorities in a number of cities, are developing proposals for tram networks or improvements to existing systems, including extensions.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A3 Hindhead

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures the South East England Development Agency took to press the case for the A3 Hindhead tunnel to remain in the active roads programme. [209512]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

None. The proposed A3 Hindhead improvement scheme remains in our strategic roads programme and has been classified as a scheme of regional importance. This was announced in the Highways Agency's press release of 1 December 2004.

Anti-bribery/Corruption Procedures

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what definition the Export Credits Guarantee Department uses of the phrase, "sufficient evidence", used in the OECD Action Statement on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits. [202924]

Mr. Alexander: The reference is to a provision in the OECD Action Statement on Bribery and Corruption and Officially Supported Export Credits which records an agreement that Export Credit Agencies shall not provide cover or support if they discover before doing so sufficient evidence that bribery has been involved in the award of the export contract. The best evidence that such is the case would be an unappealable conviction in a court of law. Short of that, ECGD would have to consider, taking into account all material matters and all the evidence available to it whether it would be reasonable for ECGD to conclude that bribery had been so involved.

Avient

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she *(a)* had sight of and *(b)* approved the recent statement by the UK National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines on Avient; and if she will make a statement. [200490]

Mr. Alexander: Yes. Ministers saw and approved the statement on Avient.

Broadband

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of Great Britain is broadband enabled, broken down by region. [208942]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: At the end of June 2004, terrestrial broadband services were available to 90 per cent. of households in the UK. The regional breakdown is set out in the table.

Household coverage—July 2004

Region	*Percentage*
East Midlands	88
East of England	86
London	100
North East	95
North West	95
Northern Ireland	75
Scotland	78
South East	93
South West	82
Wales	81
West Midlands	90
Yorkshire and Humberside	89

Source:
Analysys Consulting Limited, July 2004

Both availability and take-up of terrestrial broadband services are continuing to rise. Latest estimates indicate that availability in the UK has reached 95 per cent. and there are some 6 million broadband subscribers. We aim to reach 99 per cent. this year.

Burma

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the merits of imposing a ban on imports from Burma; and if she will make a statement. [202838]

Mr. Alexander: The Government have a long-standing policy of not encouraging British companies to trade with Burma and we offer no support to companies that wish to do so.

As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said in the House on 25 June 2003, *Official Report*, column 1042,

> "we do not believe that trade is appropriate when the regime continues to suppress the basic human rights of its people".

Through the EU's Common Position on Burma we have imposed a comprehensive programme of targeted measures on the regime. We regularly review the terms and conditions of the Common Position with our EU partners.

We favour multilateral targeted measures against Burma wherever possible because these have a greater practical impact and send a stronger political signal. We will therefore continue to support multilateral action through the EU's Common Position on Burma.

Canatxx

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the occasions on which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials from her Department have communicated with Canatxx Gas Stonage Ltd., Canatxx Energy Ventures Ltd. or a company associated with Canatxx (i) by letter, (ii) by e-mail, (iii) by telephone and (iv) in person; and if she will publish the content of such communication on the departmental website. [209827]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: The information requested is not immediately available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Events

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars, *(c)* workshops, *(d)* exhibitions and *(e)* press conferences which have been sponsored by her Department and which took place on non-departmental premises in each of the last two years giving the (i) title, (ii) purpose, (iii) date and (iv) cost of each. [202387]

Ms Hewitt: The organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops and exhibition is the responsibility of individual policy groups. The information requested is not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Employment Tribunals

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will take steps to ensure that employment tribunal awards and private settlements of employment cases brokered by ACAS can be enforced without recourse to legal action by the aggrieved person. [210469]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department of Constitutional Affairs (DCA) White Paper "Transforming Public Services: Complaints Redress and Tribunals", published in July 2004, recognised the fact that enforcement of tribunal awards can sometimes pose difficulties. It also pointed out that private settlements of cases, even if brokered by ACAS, have no status beyond that of an ordinary contract. It went on to say:

> "This is unsatisfactory. We will reform these processes so that an award of compensation, whether ordered by the tribunal or agreed between the parties, can be enforced with the minimum of bureaucracy as if it were an order of the civil courts."

Officials are working closely with their colleagues at DCA toward delivery of this commitment.

Fur

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she is taking to combat the illegal international fur trade. [206547]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The Government are strongly opposed to the illegal trade in fur skins and we fully support efforts being made through the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) to address this. We have recently committed some £15,000 to help fund a meeting of the CITES-Tiger Enforcement Task Force to co-ordinate action to combat the illicit trade in Asian big cat skins. We have also made £20,000 available to assist the Indian Government in establishing a Wildlife Crime Cell to help address the illegal trade in wildlife in that country.

At home the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) supports a network of Police Wildlife Crime Officers and Customs Officers responsible for enforcing CITES. There is also a dedicated Customs enforcement team at Heathrow Airport responsible for enforcing the international controls in CITES species. We also monitor the major internet sites and take enforcement action where possible illegal sales of wildlife items are identified. Internet crime is one of the growth areas that I have asked the National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit to focus particular attention on.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 25 constituencies have received most money in payments under the Miners' Compensation Scheme. [209178]

Nigel Griffiths: The information requested is as follows:

Constituency	*Payments*[1]	*Total (£ million)*
Easington	11,813	82.7
Barnsley East and Mexborough	13,452	78.9
Hemsworth	11,999	68.7
Bolsover	12,656	64.6
Sherwood	12,714	62.7
Mansfield	10,878	58.1
Ashfield	11,269	57.4
Bassetlaw	9,638	57.3
Doncaster North	9,105	55.2
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	7,217	52.8
Ogmore	7,188	51.3
Rhondda	6,625	49.6
Don Valley	8,199	48.2
Cynon Valley	6,464	48.1
Barnsley Central	8,559	48
Wansbeck	7,381	46.7
Pontefract and Castleford	7,481	42.6
Caerphilly	6,083	40.9
Barnsley West and Penistone	7,262	38.7
Houghton and Washington East	5,320	36.6
Islwyn	3,455	35.3
Rother Valley	6,132	35.1
Blaenau Gwent	5,521	34.3
Wentworth	5,892	33.9
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	4,745	28.8

[1] As at 31 December 2004

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the ratio of deceased to live Miners' Compensation Scheme claims is *(a)* in each region and *(b)* overall. [209179]

Nigel Griffiths: As of 31 December 2004 the figures are as follows.

Claims	Wales	Scotland	Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Leicestershire	Yorkshire	North East	Midlands	South/ South East	Total
COPD								
Live	34,716	12,933	23,036	90,205	53,277	24,164	8,214	246,427
Deceased	57,298	17,302	5,565	116,104	68,645	48,681	10,289	323,882
Total	92,012	30,235	28,601	206,309	121,922	72,845	18,503	570,427
VWF								
Live	18,031	9,403	18,241	52,130	41,296	4,812	3,845	147,758
Deceased	2,877	2,012	3,495	7,870	4,374	392	296	21,316
Total	20,908	11,415	21,736	60,000	45,670	5,204	4,141	169,074

CAB Funding

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much central Government funding was provided to Citizens Advice Bureaux in the last year for which figures are available; and how that funding is allocated. [209327]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This information is not held centrally in the Department and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, some limited information can be found in Citizens Advice's 2004 annual report.

Post Offices

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 421W, on the post office (rural subsidy), what the average assigned office payment to sub-postmasters is; and how many *(a)* rural, *(b)* urban and *(c)* urban deprived sub-post offices received assigned office payments. [210138]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Payment to individual sub-postmasters are an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural (i) sub-post offices and (ii) directly managed post offices are loss-making; and what the total annual loss was in the last year for which figures are available. [210119]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. and I have asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Premium Telephone Numbers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the operators of premium telephone number 090 66 33 6929 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [209389]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS is already taking enforcement action against service provider who uses this telephone number as the services on this number are in breach of the ICSTIS Code of Practice. ICSTIS shut down services on this number on 14 January 2005. ICSTIS will adjudicate on this service in the next few weeks. ICSTIS has the powers to fine service providers who are in breach of its Code and bar them from providing services.

WALES

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207231]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Welsh Regiments

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet the Secretary of State for Defence to discuss the renaming of the Welsh infantry regiment to reflect more prominently the names of the Royal Regiment of Wales and the Royal Welch Fusiliers. [208693]

Mr. Hain: I am aware of the strong feelings on this matter and have discussed these with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence. I will write to my hon. Friend if there are any developments.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Archaeology

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding her Department has provided for archaeology projects in each of the past seven years. [209894]

Mr. Caborn: Government funding for the historic environment is channelled through English Heritage. Since 1997–98, English Heritage has distributed the following amounts through its grants programme to support a wide range of archaeology related research, external capacity building and outreach projects:

	£
1997–98	5,385,000
1998–99	4,673,000
1999–00	5,050,000
2000–01	4,557,000
2001–02	5,117,000
2002–03	5,473,000
2003–04	5,594,000

English Heritage also receives additional funding from Defra's Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. Since 2002–03 it has distributed the following amounts from the Fund to support archaeology projects:

	£
2002–03	3,640,000
2003–04	5,184,000

Art Exports

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to place a temporary export licence ban on Damien Hirst's "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living" (1991)—the Shark—and what reports she has received of attempts to keep the object in the country. [210110]

Estelle Morris: The export controls on objects of cultural interest apply only to objects manufactured or produced more than 50 years before the date of exportation. This means that Damien Hirst's "The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living" will not require an export licence; and I, therefore, do not have the power to intervene in its export.

Clwyd, South Constituency

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210327]

Mr. Caborn: Most of the matters for which the Department is responsible in England have been devolved in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales. However, there are some reserved areas in which the Government has introduced initiatives which affect the Clwyd, South constituency.

The Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement) Order 2003 repealed those parts of the Licensing Act 1964 which allowed the local government electorate in the counties and county boroughs of Wales to requisition polls to decide whether licensed premises should be allowed to open on Sundays. This has removed the uncertainty which businesses in Wales, including those in Clwyd South, faced, allowing them to exercise long-term planning. It also removes a costly administrative burden on local authorities and an artificial difference in licensing controls between Wales and England, which prevented businesses and customers exercising freedom of choice.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Clwyd South, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Clwyd, South has benefited from over 280 awards totalling over £5.6 million. Of these, 70 awards worth over £1.5 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999.

DCMS/EU Co-operation

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with the European Commission on the supporting, co-ordinating and complementary action which may be taken by the EU in the field of *(a)* culture, *(b)* tourism and *(c)* sport under article I-17 of the proposed EU Constitution. [209586]

Mr. Caborn: My Department has not undertaken detailed discussions about the new competences in sport and tourism with the European Commission as such discussions would pre-empt the result of the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty.

(a) Culture: Concerning the future culture programmes of the EU, my officials have regular meetings with other Member States and the European Commission.

(b) Sport: DCMS has not had any bilateral discussions with the Commission. However, UK delegations have attended meetings of EU Sports Directors and meetings of EU Sports Ministers—where the Commission is also represented—at which discussions about future EU action in the field of sport have taken place.

(c) Tourism: DCMS has not had any bilateral discussions with the European Commission on the proposed new competence for tourism in the EU Constitutional Treaty. DCMS officials have been present at EU meetings when the topic of the new competence has been discussed in general terms.

Digital Switch-over

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps the Government are taking to ensure the revised target date of 2012 for switch off of the analogue signal is met; and if she will make a statement. [210013]

Estelle Morris: The Government will confirm the timetable for switchover once the few remaining issues relating to digital switchover are resolved and we are satisfied that the interests of consumers, especially the most vulnerable, are well protected.

We are working with broadcasters, Ofcom, leading charities, consumer groups and other stakeholders to determine the most appropriate timetable. This has to meet the interests of consumers and the economy as a whole and be achievable by the broadcasters.

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress the Government have made towards meeting its targets for digital switchover. [210014]

Estelle Morris: Great progress has been made. We welcome the fact that Ofcom have issued Digital Replacement Licences to the Commercial Public Service Broadcasters.

Following the recommendations of the independent Ofcom Consumer panel and Digital Television Consumer Expert Group reports, we are working with leading charities to consider how to best protect the interest of consumers, particularly the most vulnerable.

Stakeholders are also now working on the structure and remit of a switchover implementation body, which should be in place this year. Digital take-up is well above industry forecasts. Almost 60 per cent. of households are now estimated to have a digital television.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the applicability of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to the Press Complaints Commission; and if she will designate the Press Complaints Commission as a public body for the purposes of the Act. [210147]

Estelle Morris: The Freedom of Information Act does not apply to the Press Complaints Commission (PCC) as it is not a public authority. The Government strongly believes that a press free from any state intervention is fundamental to democracy. Designating the PCC a public authority would not be compatible with the Government's support for an independent body overseeing Press self-regulation

Liquor Licensing

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from local authorities concerning the proposed *(a)* transition fees and *(b)* annual fees for liquor licensing. [209663]

Mr. Caborn: The draft fee levels payable under the Licensing Act 2003 were subject to a public consultation which concluded on 23 December 2004. Views from everybody with an interest in fee levels have been considered, including from local authorities. Responses were received from 136 individual local authorities. Separate responses were also received from the Local Government Association and Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS); and from the Association of London Government; on behalf of local authorities.

Lottery Funding (Sunderland)

Mr. Etherington: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what support her Department is giving to visitor attractions in Sunderland; and if she will make a statement. [209536]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS supports the tourism industry as a whole. For example, visitor attractions in Sunderland will benefit from my Department's funding for VisitBritain, which for 2004–05 includes £35.5 million for marketing Britain as a tourism destination overseas, and £10.4 million for marketing England to the domestic tourism market.

The Regional Development Agencies have strategic responsibility for tourism in the regions. In 2004–05 my Department is contributing £330,000 to the Government's funding for One North East.

Attractions in Sunderland have also benefited directly from National Lottery funding.

PSA Targets

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost was to *(a)* her Department, *(b)* other Government Departments and *(c)* Government sponsored bodies were of (i) formulating, (ii) implementing and (iii) assessing her Department's public service agreement targets four and five, as set out in the departmental annual report 2004. [210111]

Mr. Caborn: The information is not available in the form requested. The Department attributes expenditure incurred in delivering its objectives in schedule 5 of the resource accounts. Expenditure incurred on the public service agreement (PSA) targets springing from these objectives is included within expenditure allocated to each objective. Such expenditure, however, is not separately identifiable in the expenditure figures in schedule 5, and could be provided in the detail required in the question only at disproportionate cost.

The PSA targets referred to in the 2004 departmental annual report relate to the spending review 2000 period. The expenditure incurred in delivering the objectives for the 2002 sending review period were reported in the 2003–04 resource accounts, which were not available at the time the 2004 annual report was published.

Underwater Heritage

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Government will ratify the Unesco Convention on Underwater Heritage; and if she will make a statement. [210917]

Mr. Caborn: The UK Government has no current plans to sign the Unesco Convention but has adopted the annex of the Convention as best practice for archaeology.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what reason the Government has not yet ratified the Unesco Convention on Underwater Heritage; and if she will make a statement. [210918]

Mr. Caborn: The UK Government did not ratify the Unesco Convention because we would be required to protect all underwater cultural heritage over 100 years old. This is not practical as there are over 10,000 known wreck sites in UK waters.

We believe that it is better to focus our efforts and resources on protecting the most important examples of our underwater cultural heritage.

We have however shown commitment to archaeological best practice by adopting the annex to this Convention and ratifying the Valetta Convention (Treaty of Malta also known as the European Convention on Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1992).

Video Violence

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of measures in place to prevent children from gaining access to violent films and video games; [209737]

(2) what legal sanctions may be imposed against retailers who sell or supply 18 films or video games with an 18 classification to children. [209736]

(3) what assessment her Department has undertaken of possible links between violent crime and violent television programmes and video games. [209739]

Estelle Morris: Access by children to films in video/DVD format and computer games is controlled by the Video Recordings Act 1984, under which supplying videos, DVDs or games classified by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) to those who do not meet the age requirements is punishable by a fine of up to £5,000, a prison sentence of up to six months, or both. The Cinemas Act 1985, provides for the licensing of cinemas by local authorities, and under these arrangements controls on access by children to cinemas can be stipulated. In 2003, only 32 (or 2 per cent.) of the 1,484 computer games published depicted 'gross violence' and therefore required legal classification by the BBFC. Of these, just seven were considered to be suitable for only those aged over 18.

Local trading standards officers have enforcement powers under the 1984 Act. On 10 December 2004, my officials met members of the Trading Standards Institute and the Local Government Association along with representatives of the retail sector to discuss how the sale of violent computer games could be better regulated. Further discussions on enforcement are to be held.

A great deal of research has been carried out on whether violent films, television or games have an impact on real-life behaviour, but there is much conflicting opinion. The Department has recently commissioned a review of the existing research to determine whether the alleged link between playing violent computer games and real-life violence has any substance.

Welsh Television

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ensure that ITV Wales continues to produce at least 10 hours of original Welsh programming and programmes for S4C until 2012. [209740]

Estelle Morris: ITV Wales has no obligation to produce Welsh-language programming but is currently required to produce a minimum of 10 hours a week (averaged over a calendar year) of programmes of particular interest to people in Wales for showing on ITV. These programmes are broadcast in English. Ofcom are currently considering the sustainability of this obligation as part of their Public Service Broadcasting review.

DEFENCE

BAE Systems

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what work BAE Systems carried out at *(a)* RAF Cottismore and *(b)* RAF Marham in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004; [209496]

(2) what contracts were entered into with BAE Systems at RAF Cottesmore in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [209517]

Mr. Ingram: The Tornado Integrated Project Team provides logistic support to the entire Tornado GR4/F3 departmental fleet. The information requested is not held in a format that would allow identification of work specifically carried out by BAE Systems, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In January 2003, BAE Systems was awarded a contract to form the Joint Repair Management Team (JRMT) at RAF Cottesmore. The contract ended in June 2004. The JRMT was replaced by the Joint Repair Organisation (JRO) and a contract was awarded to BAE Systems in June 2004 to form the new JRO.

In September 2004 a contracted task was raised against the Harrier Post Design Services contract to provide eight BAE Systems personnel to work on the Harrier Pulse Line.

An enabling contract for the Harrier Joint Upgrade and Maintenance Programme (JUMP) was awarded to BAE Systems on 15 November 2004.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many BAE Systems personnel worked at *(a)* RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* RAF Marham in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [209497]

Mr. Ingram: In 2003 seven BAE Systems personnel were working permanently at RAF Cottesmore in support of contracted tasks. In 2004 a total of 34 BAE Systems staff were similarly employed although not all of those individuals were present for the full calendar year.

Information on the number of BAE Systems personnel working at RAF Marham in 2003 and 2004 respectively is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Brunei

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reason the three offshore patrol vessels built by BAE Systems and endorsed by the Royal Navy for the Royal Brunei Navy are subject to arbitration; [208484]

(2) what the total value is of the *(a)* contract now and *(b)* through life support for the three offshore patrol vessels built for the Royal Brunei Navy. [208482]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The current value of the contract and the costs of through-life support for these vessels are a matter for the parties to the contract, BAE Systems and the Government of Brunei. I can confirm that the Royal Navy, with the agreement of both parties, undertook last year an independent study of the progress of the programme, but it would be inappropriate to comment on the continuing discussions between the parties about the acceptance of the vessels.

Camouflage Garment Contract

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what types of camouflage garments and how many of each type had been delivered up to 31 December 2004 under the terms of his Department's camouflage garment contract. [209394]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* It is assumed that my hon. Friend refers to the award of a contract for Cut and Sewn Garments. As stated in reply to his earlier question of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 694W, deliveries of combat clothing under this contract are not due to commence until early 2005.

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the officials who conducted the most recent review of his Department's contract awarded for the manufacture of camouflage garments were the same as those responsible for making the award. [209395]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* An independent review was carried out by a senior civil servant outside of the business area associated with the award of the contract.

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the scale of subsidies given to the China people's liberation factory 3533 by the Chinese Government in connection with his Department's contract for camouflage garment manufacture. [209396]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence does not hold this information as the Prime Contractor is not required to provide this detail under the terms of the contract.

Damaged Harriers

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the estimated cost was of the damage to Harrier air frames at RAF Cottesmore in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [209519]

Mr. Ingram: In 2003 and 2004, no Harrier aircraft was damaged while undergoing repair and maintenance at RAF Cottesmore.

Falcon

Syd Rapson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the early introduction into service of Falcon is required to secure the operational benefits of network enabled capability. [209748]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The capability provided by Falcon will contribute significantly to delivering the operational benefits of network enabled capability (NEC), along with a number of other capabilities. But the exact timing of the introduction into service of any particular capability will not determine the overall success of the long term NEC initiative.

Fire Service

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost incurred by his Department as a result of the strikes by firefighters in 2003 was; and if he will make a statement. [209806]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence provided emergency fire cover during the national firefighters' strikes of 2002 and 2003 in response to a request from ODPM. ODPM agreed in advance to reimburse MOD's marginal costs. This has now been done and the bill amounted to slightly over £75 million excluding VAT.

Additionally, ODPM requested MOD assistance when strike action was projected in the summer of 2004. Although that dispute was resolved without strikes taking place, MOD incurred preparatory costs of £602,000 excluding VAT. These too have been claimed from ODPM.

Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft Programme

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to finalise the endorsement of preferred bidder status for the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft Programme; and if he will make a statement. [209155]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence is currently considering the progress made to date with Air Tanker in single bidder discussions. We expect to make a decision in the coming months on whether Air Tanker should be accorded preferred bidder status for this complex and important PFI competition. We shall of course ensure that the House is kept fully informed of significant developments.

Gibraltar Police

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date the Department received the views of the solicitor representing the Gibraltar Service Police Association on the intention to deduct moneys from police officers arising from the dispute about the payment of rent allowances and the application of the analogue principle; for what reasons a substantive reply has not been sent; and if he will make a statement. [209694]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 19 January 2005]:* Ministry of Defence officials in Gibraltar first received correspondence from Marrache and Company, the solicitors acting for the Gibraltar Services Police Association (GSPSA), in February 2004. MOD officials have been involved in a long exchange of correspondence with the solicitors in which they have consistently set out the Department's intention to recover the over-payment. Marrache and Company have had a copy of the letter from MOD officials to the GSPSA, which sets out the Department's position in detail since February 2004.

Infantry Future Army Structure

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether Sandhurst Officer Cadets will be able to apply for the individual battalions rather than the new regiments when the new Infantry Future Army Structure is in place; [208291]

(2) whether the individual battalions in the new regiments within the Prince of Wales, Kings and Scottish Divisions will be allowed to recruit officers in the new Infantry Future Army Structure. [208292]

Mr. Ingram: Recruitment of officer cadets under the Infantry Future Army Structure will be by regiment, rather than individual battalion. Recruits will remain entitled to state their interests and preferences, and, although every effort will be made to accommodate each recruit, there can be no guarantee that these will be met.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Infantry battalions will have training time free of operational call up when the Infantry Future Army Structure is in place. [208295]

Mr. Ingram: The Army is implementing, under Future Army Structures, a strategy to deliver both training and commitments known as the Force Operations and Readiness Mechanism (FORM); a replacement for the Formation Readiness Cycle. All Army units, including Infantry battalions, will programme their training and operational commitment activities according to the principles of FORM.

FORM enables the Army to meet its outputs (force elements ready for both programmed operations and contingent operations) from within the force structure. The sequence of activity for any one force element, such as an Infantry battalion, is in five separate six month phases: recuperation; unit and battlegroup training; formation training; high readiness; and an operational deployment.

Inglis Barracks

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects British Forces Post Office to vacate their site at Mill Hill, Inglis Barracks; and if he will make a statement. [202972]

Mr. Caplin: A project is in place to provide a new facility at RAF Northolt for the British Forces Post Office. It is planned that this facility will be occupied during 2007, at which time Inglis Barracks will be vacated.

Iran

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Iranian authorities have returned the Royal Marine boats, weapons and equipment that were seized during the recent Gulf hostilities; and if he will make a statement. [209821]

Mr. Ingram: The Iranian authorities have not returned the boats and equipment which they seized on 21 June. We continue to press for their return.

Royal Regiment of Scotland

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the future Royal Regiment of Scotland will be able to maintain the establishment for five battalions under present recruiting levels. [208293]

Mr. Ingram: The ability to man the five battalions of the Royal Regiment of Scotland will depend on a number of factors. It is not possible to predict its establishment until it is clear what roles the battalions of the regiment will be assigned. Recruitment to the Scottish Division has recently been slightly depressed not least by coverage of 'Save the Regiment' campaigns. However, assuming that the establishment of the future battalions remains broadly similar to current levels and a return to the recruiting levels achieved in recent years, levels of enlistment to the Royal Regiment of Scotland should be sufficient to sustain five battalions.

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208630]

Mr. Caplin: The information is as follows:

Inward Secondments

There are currently 24 staff seconded in to the Ministry of Defence from the Private Sector. Information available on these staff is as follows:

Parent organisation	*Area of responsibility within MOD*	*Number of staff*
BAE Systems	Procurement	1
AWE	Project Management	2
Lockheed Martin	Project Management	1
Rolls Royce	Procurement	1
Masons	Finance	2
Alstom	Engineering	1
Qinetiq	Procurement	1
Burgess Salmon	Legal	1
British Aerospace	Defence Export Sales Organisation	1
Partnerships UK	Commercial	1
Grant Thornton	Logistics	1
PricewaterhouseCooper	Logistics	1
BAE Systems	Logistics	2
Babtie Group Ltd.	Logistics	2
Halcrow Group	Logistics	3
DML	Logistics	2
MS Ltd.	Scientific Research	1

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209581]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tsunami (Military Assistance)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason flights scheduled to deliver aid to areas affected by the tsunami in Asia have been held up at RAF Lyneham. [209728]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: Flights to deliver aid to the areas affected by the tsunami have not been held up. The Ministry of Defence is carrying out operations as tasked by DFID. DFID has agreed to transport appropriate relief items procured by Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) agencies in response to specific and stated needs on the ground. The MOD originally made available one C17 and five C130 (Hercules) aircraft to assist the relief operation. In fact, C17s and KC1 (Tristar) aircraft have been used more extensively due to the distances and types of cargo involved.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment Services

17. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what changes are *(a)* under way and *(b)* planned in Greater London in the provision of employment and related services. [209988]

Malcolm Wicks: The rollout of fully integrated Jobcentre Plus offices is continuing, with over 500 new style offices providing a modern, customer focussed service to over a million people every week.

Over 40 new Jobcentre Plus offices are already delivering to customers in London with the remainder to be rolled out in the next two years.

Employment Advisers

18. **Mr. Tom Harris:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the role that placing employment advisers within GPs' surgeries might have on encouraging people into work. [209989]

Alan Johnson: I refer my hon. Friend to the oral answer I gave earlier today to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Miss Begg).

Customer Services

19. **Mr. Win Griffiths:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress being made to improve customer service in those offices in his Department which work directly with the general public. [209990]

Malcolm Wicks: In recent years DWP has received massive investment to enable us to deliver an improved, modernised and more efficient service to our customers—particularly those staff dealing directly with the public. For example, we are putting an extra 10,000 staff in to front line roles. Roles like Jobcentre Plus Personal Advisers who offer personal, tailored services to help get individuals back into work and build on our, already, record levels of employment.

Disability Discrimination Act

21. **Ms Keeble:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what support is provided for people with disabilities taking action under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. [209992]

Maria Eagle: Under provisions in the Disability Rights Commission Act 1999, the DRC provides advice and information to disabled people about how they may enforce their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. The Commission has powers to provide assistance in relation to proceedings in certain circumstances, and it operates a conciliation service for disputes under Parts 3 and 4 of the Act.

Disabled people taking action under the DDA may also obtain advice from sources such as disability organisations, trade unions and Citizens Advice Bureaux.

State Pension

22. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were in receipt of state retirement pension in the Coventry, South constituency in (i) 1999 and (ii) 2004. [209993]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the following table.

	Men	*Women*
1999	6,300	10,200
2004	6,000	10,100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a high degree of sampling variation.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
4. Figures show all people getting a state pension i.e. a Category A, B, C or D state pension or graduated retirement benefit.

Source:

IAD Information Centre 5 per cent. sample as at 30 September 1999 and 31 March 2004.

Older Workers

23. **Mr. Tynan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he plans to take to encourage and help older workers in employment. [209994]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government is committed to tackling age discrimination in employment and extending opportunities for older workers. New Deal 50 plus is part of the campaign to improve the employment prospects of older people and encourage them to return to work.

Budget 2004 announced a new high profile national guidance campaign to raise employers' awareness of, and ability to adopt, flexible employment and retirement opportunities in order to increase the recruitment, retention and training of older workers.

Pension Credit

24. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of how many pensioners are not claiming the pension credit to which they are entitled. [209995]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not currently available. We plan to publish definitive National Statistics on take-up and entitlement for the first six months of pension credit by the end of 2005.

I am pleased to inform my hon. Friend that as at the end of last year 4,072 pensioner households (4,870 individuals) were receiving pension credit, with an average weekly payment of £41.68 per household.

Mr. Ivan Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many old age pensioners within the Harwich constituency are in receipt of pension credit. [210685]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October 2004, 7,125 pensioner households in Harwich, comprising 9,010 individuals, were in receipt of pension credit.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
3. Pension credit figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice.

Action for Employment

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* grants he has made to and *(b)* contracts he has made with Action for Employment (A4e) in each of the last five years; and what conditions apply to the use of such grants for the production of marketing materials. [207771]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* Around 200 contracts have been placed with Action for Employment since 2001. A list of these contracts has been placed in the Library.

Information on contracts with Action for Employment prior to the formation of the Department for Work and Pensions is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Department has not made any grants to Action for Employment.

Benefit Fraud

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of measures his Department has taken to tackle benefit fraud. [209978]

Malcolm Wicks: We have made excellent progress in the fight against fraud. By March 2004 we had reduced fraud in the two main working age benefits by half.

Since 1997 we have saved the equivalent of over £1 billion through the effectiveness of our counter-fraud measures. And that can only be good news for the taxpayer.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what systems are in place *(a)* to assess the relative urgency of cases referred to the MP's hotline in the South West Business Unit of the Child Support Agency and *(b)* to prioritise cases accordingly. [209367]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 24 January 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what systems are in place *(a)* to assess the relative urgency of cases referred to the MP's hotline in the South West Business Unit of the Child Support Agency and *(b)* to prioritise them accordingly.

All cases referred by Members of Parliament, including those referred to the 'MP Hotline', are regarded as high priority. If a case is drawn to the Agency's attention as one of a critical nature the resolution manager will engage with it immediately and if necessary deploy additional resource to investigate it.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff in each business unit of the Child Support Agency have been diverted to deal with complaints about the new system for assessing claims. [209735]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. David Drew, dated 24 January 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many staff in each business unit of the Child Support Agency have been diverted to deal with complaints about the new system for assessing claims.

I do not have the information you seek. I can however say that there are currently around 870 staff within the Agency employed either directly in teams handling complaints and/or teams handling correspondence from members of parliament, stakeholder groups or clients who may have earlier made a complaint. The broad analysis between current business units is:

	Number
Midlands	140
South East	110
Scotland and North East England	120
South West	110
Wales and North West	180
Eastern	210

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects Child Support Agency (CSA) cases in Sittingbourne and Sheppey on the old CSA system to be transferred to the new system. [210117]

Mr. Pond: I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green), on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 568W.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when C. R. Ward, CSA reference 1036830004, will be switched from the old to the new CSA system. [210600]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Derek Wyatt:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when C. R. Ward Child Support Agency reference 1036830004 will be switched from the old to the new Child Support Agency system.

As details about individual cases are confidential I will write to you separately about this case.

EU Presidency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Government's priorities for the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [209554]

Mr. Pond: The main priorities of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (ESPHCA) Council are listed in the UK-Luxembourg Annual Operating Programme for 2005 which is available in the Library of the House.

The programme plans to make progress on:

finalising the Joint Council and Commission Employment Report 2004–2005;

the Regulation to implement the Social Security co-ordinating Regulation;

seeking an agreement on the proposal to establish a community programme for employment and social strategy (PROGRESS);

seeking an agreement on the directive amending Directive 2003/88/EC on working time.

The programme aims to take forward:

the directive regarding the exposure of workers to optical radiation;

the directive under Article 141 which merges and recasts previous equality directives;

focussing on new Health Strategy.

The specific issues appearing on the Council Agenda during the UK Presidency will depend on progress made by the preceding Luxembourg Presidency.

Homelessness

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he plans to take to reduce the disincentives to re-enter employment for homeless households placed in expensive temporary accommodation. [209644]

Mr. Pond: We are, together with other agencies, already working hard to ensure that as much as possible is being done to remove the multiple barriers to employment faced by the homeless.

The Department provides a range of services to help homeless people find employment, from support from personal advisers based in Jobcentres to specific initiatives such as Progress2work, Progress2work-LinkUP and Action Teams for Jobs. Additionally, homeless people can have early access to the New Deals and other national programmes.

We recognise that temporary accommodation attracts high management charges that, in turn, lead to high rents. These can act as a barrier to employment. We have no current plans for any significant changes to the housing benefit rules for those in temporary accommodation in the short term. However, we are exploring with colleagues across government all possible options to address this issue.

One of these options involves pilot work to look at the "block grant" approach, whereby tenants pay an affordable rent for their accommodation, assisted through the housing benefit scheme where appropriate, with the extra costs funded by way of a direct central Government grant.

The Government are involved in a project run by the Greater London Authority to test the effects of a lower rent together with increased training opportunities and employment advice for people living in temporary accommodation.

Incapacity Benefit

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to encourage people claiming incapacity benefit back into employment. [209991]

Maria Eagle: We estimate that the Pathways pilots have so far helped 8,300 people into work. From October this year we will extend the programme to cover about a third of the country, offering help to nearly 900,000 people on incapacity benefits. My hon. Friend will be pleased to know that her constituency will be included in this extension.

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to reform incapacity benefit. [209981]

Maria Eagle: The majority of people who start claiming incapacity benefits want, and expect, to go back into employment.

That is why we are fully focused on providing better help and support for people on incapacity benefits.

Pathways to Work is helping people to do just that and from October this year we will extend the programme to cover about a third of the country, enabling us to offer this help to nearly 900,000 people on incapacity benefits.

We will publish further details shortly in our 5-Year Plan about our longer-term ambitions for incapacity benefits.

Mr. Tam Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his Oral Answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1386, on incapacity benefit, what progress he has made with his investigation into the rules on permitted work for claimants of incapacity benefit. [210113]

Maria Eagle: On 14 December, we published the report "A Stepping Stone to Employment" with the findings of the independent research commissioned by my Department into the first two years of operation of the permitted work rules. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

The permitted work rules allow people with health conditions and disabilities to try out paid work while remaining on benefits, as a stepping stone to full-time work. The research showed that people on incapacity benefits participating in permitted work have been helped to return to full-time jobs and many of those surveyed found that their health conditions were not the barriers to work that they originally thought.

The Chancellor announced changes to the rules in the pre-Budget report based on the key findings of the research. Our overall intention is to bring more people into permitted work with the eventual aim of progressing into full-time employment. Therefore, we will be introducing measures to improve permitted work by raising greater awareness of the provision and encouraging more people to take advantage of the scheme; there will be more regular face-to-face contact with personal advisers and staff will get new guidance and training materials. The rules will be simplified by allowing all participants an initial period of 52 weeks.

However, we are also acknowledging the position of those least likely to progress into full-time work. We are exploring ways to allow people with progressive conditions to be able to continue permitted work beyond the initial 52 weeks without being limited to earnings of £20.

Lie Detectors

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what assessment his Department has made of the value of using lie detector technology when assessing benefits claims. [207723]

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, (1) whether his Department plans to use lie detectors on benefit claimants; [207790]

(2) what his policy is on whether the possible use of lie detectors in connection with benefit claims should apply *(a)* through random sampling and *(b)* to volunteers only; [207877]

(3) on whom his Department has market-tested lie detectors; and what level of accuracy was shown in the results. [207879]

Mr. Pond: We aim to keep up to date with the latest technology which impacts upon benefit delivery and are therefore aware of voice stress analysis as used by various insurance companies. However, we have made no formal assessment of the value of this technology and have no current plans to introduce such measures.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advice he has received on the potential use of lie detectors with regard to benefit claimants; and if he will place a copy of such advice in the Library. [207878]

Mr. Pond: No advice on the use of voice stress analysis has been received by DWP. We are in the early stages of conducting preliminary investigations into how voice stress analysis technology is currently used in the private sector.

No formal assessment has been made and we have no plans at present to introduce such measures.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since his appointment. [209225]

Alan Johnson: There is no record kept of cancelled engagements in my ministerial diary. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business.

New Deal

Mr. Ivan Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have benefited from the New Deal in the Harwich constituency since 1997. [210682]

Jane Kennedy: The New Deal has been very successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work including 1,800 in the Harwich constituency.

Information on the number of people who have participated in and the number helped into work by each New Deal programme in Harwich is in the table.

Number of people who have participated in and who have found work through New Deal programmes in the Harwich constituency[1]

Programme	*Number of people starting the programme*	*Number of people gaining a job*
New Deal for Lone Parents	990	500
New Deal for Young People	1,340	850
New Deal 25 plus	620	230
New Deal 50 plus[2]	—	220
Total	2,950	1,800

[1] All data are to September 2004, except for New Deal 50 plus which is to March 2003.

[2] Figures for New Deal 50 plus relate to starts to the Employment Credit element of the programme. No information is currently available on the number of individual starts to New Deal 50 plus.

Notes:

1. New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners is not available at parliamentary constituency level.

2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and therefore components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information and Analysis Directorate.

Poor Pensioners

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of *(a)* single female pensioners, *(b)* single male pensioners and *(c)* pensioner couples are living in poverty. [210349]

Malcolm Wicks: Poverty is about more than low income; is also about other important factors in their lives—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03".

Information about low income among pensioners in Great Britain in 2002–03 is in the table.

Proportion of pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of median, 2002–03

Low-income threshold family type	*Before housing costs below 60 per cent. median*	*After housing costs below 60 per cent. median*
(a) Single female pensioner	22	21
(b) Single male pensioner	17	17
(c) Pensioner couple	21	23

Further Information about low income is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the percentage of *(a)* single female pensioners, *(b)* single male pensioners and *(c)* pensioner couples who would be in poverty if the basic state pension was paid at its current level to all pensioners. [210376]

Malcolm Wicks: Information in the format requested is unavailable.

Estimates of the number of pensioners with low income under a different policy, such as that described in the question, are subject to a high degree of uncertainty. However, using the Department's Policy Simulation Model for 2004–05 it has been estimated that the effect of paying the maximum rate of basic state pension to all pensioners is a reduction in the order of five percentage points of the proportion of pensioner couples with incomes below 60 per cent. of median income, on both the "before housing costs" and on the "after housing costs" measures. The proportion of single female pensioners and single male pensioners on low income is estimated to remain broadly unchanged as a result of paying the full amount of basic state pension to all pensioners.

Post Office Card Account

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what investigations he has made into the reliability and efficiency of the Post Office Card Account's computer system; and if he will make a statement. [209951]

Mr. Pond: A contract exists between Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Post Office Ltd. (POL) for the provision of the Post Office card account service to agreed service standards. Since April 2003 DWP has successfully made over 67 million payments to Post Office card accounts and as at December 2004 over 4 million card accounts have been opened. Throughout the period DWP has been liaising with POL, monitoring the performance of the service against service standards on an on-going basis.

Since April 2003 there have been a small number of service incidents that have briefly affected payment to DWP customers. On these occasions there has been close contact with POL to understand the problem, to ensure action was being taken in line with comprehensive continuity arrangements included in the contract to restore the service quickly, and to ensure that remedial action has been taken and any lessons learned acted upon.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have been unable to collect their pensions due to breakdowns of the Post Office card account computer system since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [209952]

Mr. Pond: The Information is not available in the form requested. Since April 2003, when the Post Office card account system was introduced, there have been a small number of incidents that have briefly affected payments to the Department's customers. These incidents have caused some inconvenience to customers and delay in withdrawing benefit from accounts. It is not possible to say how many customers were temporarily unable to collect their pensions at the Post Office as a result.

Social Fund

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what targets have been set for processing new social fund claims in each year since 2001. [210100]

Mr. Pond: Jobcentre Plus has a number of Key Management Indicators (KMI) with which it measures performance, including that of the Social Fund.

The Social Fund KMI up to April 2004 related to the actual average clearance time (AACT) for Community Care Grants, this was set at nine days.

From April 2004 the Social Fund KMI included additional elements as follows.

Key management indicators	
Social Fund Accuracy	75 per cent.
Community Care Grant AACT	9 days
Budgeting loans AACT	8 days
Crisis loans AACT	2 days
Funeral payments AACT	16 days
Sure Start maternity Grants AACT	5 days
Internal Reviews AACT	10 days

Prior to April 2004 there were no nationally set KMIs for elements for the Social Fund other than Community Care Grants, however, many districts monitored performance at a local level.

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the most recent figures issued by Eurostat are for youth unemployment in each EU member state. [206387]

Mr. Pond: The annual unemployment, employment and activity rates for populations aged 15–24 most recently released by Eurostat are in the table.

Percentage

	Aged 15–24 unemployment rate	*Aged 15–24 employment rate*	*Aged 15–24 economically active*
Austria	7.2	51	55.5
Belgium	21.5	27.4	35.0
Cyprus	10.6	37.6	41.3
Czech Republic	18.6	30	36.8
Denmark	10.3	59.6	65.6
Estonia	22.9	29.3	36.9
EU	18.3	36.7	45.0
EU15	15.8	39.7	47.2
Finland	21.8	39.7	50.7
France	20.2	29.9	37.4
Germany	11.1	44	49.1
Greece	26.3	25.5	34.5
Hungary	13.1	26.8	31.0
Ireland	8.3	48	52.8
Italy	27	25.2	34.6
Latvia	17.6	31.5	38.4
Lithuania	27.2	22.5	30.0
Luxembourg	10.4	*29.7	*32.7
Malta	19.8	*51	*59.6
Netherlands	6.7	67.9	72.6
Poland	41.1	21.2	36.4
Portugal	14.4	38.7	45.3
Slovak Republic	32.9	27.4	41.1
Slovenia	15.9	29.1	35.2
Spain	22.7	33.4	43.2
Sweden	13.4	41.2	47.7
United Kingdom	12.3	55.5	63.3

Notes:

1. Figures are for 2003 except for * which are 2002.

2. The figures are published in Employment in Europe 2004 at: http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2004/sep/eie2004_en.html

3. The UK has a youth (15-24) activity rate of 63.3 per cent., a youth employment rate of 55.5 per cent. and a youth unemployment rate of 12.3 per cent.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast Agreement

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what amendments he expects will need to be proposed to the Belfast Agreement as a consequence of the adoption of the 'Proposals by the British and Irish Governments for a Comprehensive Agreement.' [206890]

Mr. Paul Murphy: As I said in this House on 9 December, the Agreement was not set in stone when first signed and it was clearly always the intention that certain elements would be open to change; the commitment to review and report on its operation, which was written into the Agreement itself, would have made no sense otherwise. Equally, certain fundamental aspects of the Agreement have always been regarded by the Governments and the other parties who supported it as fundamental, and not open to change.

We do not envisage any textual amendment of the Agreement at all. But, as the hon. Lady will have seen, our proposals would involve a number of changes in the way the Agreement operates.

Children's Fund

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact of the Children's Fund on service development in the Province. [202598]

Mr. Pearson: The Children's Fund has provided time-bounded service development funding through both the statutory and the voluntary and community sectors. Two statutory rounds of funding, one in April 2001 and the other in June 2002, provided a total of £20.5 million in support of 26 projects. A further allocation of some £17 million was announced on 5 March 2003 to the voluntary and community sector funding 101 projects over three years commencing 1 April 2003.

While there will be no new funding via the Children's Fund, £15 million has been allocated in the recent Budget for a Capital Modernisation Fund to which children's organisations will be able to apply for support.

Civil Servants

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees of the Department of *(a)* Education, *(b)* Social Development, *(c)* Regional Development, *(d)* Culture Arts and Leisure, *(e)* Environment, *(f)* the First and Deputy First Minister, *(g)* Education and Learning, *(h)* Health, Personal Social Services and Safety, *(i)* Enterprise, Trade and Investment, *(j)* Agriculture and Rural Development and *(k)* Finance and Personnel have been subject to disciplinary proceedings in the last 12 months; and what the total workforce is of each Department. [208699]

Mr. Pearson: During the last 12 months (January to December 2004), a total of 325 members of staff working in the Departments listed were subject to disciplinary proceedings. The breakdown for each Department, which includes staff working in executive agencies, together with the total workforce for each, is as follows:

	Number of staff subject to disciplinary proceedings (January-December 2004)	*Total staff in post at 1 October 2004*
(a) Education	1	688
(b) Social Development	224	8,239
(c) Regional Development	24	4,851
(d) Culture, Arts and Leisure	1	454
(e) Environment	4	2,640
(f) Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	Nil	422
(g) Employment and Learning	11	1,802
(h) Health, Social Services and Public Safety	35	1,049
(i) Enterprise, Trade and Investment	2	757
(j) Agriculture and Rural Development	20	4,251
(k) Finance and Personnel	3	3,041
Totals	325	28,194

Londonderry Airport

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will announce his decision on the funding requests from Londonderry city council regarding Londonderry airport. [210343]

Mr. Spellar: I hope that an announcement can be made soon. Issues relating to the economic benefits to the northwest of investment in the airport, options for governance of the airport and state aid are still being considered.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209215]

Mr. Murphy: There is no record kept of cancelled engagements in Northern Ireland Office Minister's diaries. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202558]

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 session. [201556]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Ribble Valley (Mr. Evans) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 62W.

Information is not held in the format requested. While it is not always possible, the Northern Ireland Office, including the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration, aims to answer all ordinary written questions within one working week and all named day questions on the day named for answer. An average of 75 per cent. of questions were answered on time in the 2003–04 session. Information is not readily available for the 1997–98 session.

Water Industry

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the condition of Northern Ireland's water infrastructure; and what the main cause was of the failure of that infrastructure to meet EU Directive standards. [208414]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Eddie McGrady, dated 20 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a parliamentary Question about the condition of Northern Ireland's water infrastructure and the main cause of the failure of that infrastructure to meet EU Directive standards (208414). I have been asked to reply as the issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service's second Asset Management Plan (NIAMP2), which was completed in 2003, identified that £2.9 billion needs to be invested over the next 20 years to modernise the existing water and sewerage infrastructure. NIAMP2 assessed the condition of the Water Service's above ground assets including treatment works, pumping stations, etc. and less than 5 per cent. were considered to be in poor condition or functionally unsound. While the condition of the above ground assets is generally good, many of the current treatment works were not designed to meet the more stringent standards associated with current EU Directives. The upgrading of water and wastewater treatment works accounts for £1 billion of the total investment required. It is much more difficult to define the condition of below ground assets, but use of an industry recognised statistical model identified an investment need for this asset group of almost double that required for above ground assets. Over two-thirds of this below ground investment is attributable to keeping the networks in a serviceable condition over the 20 year period.

The failure of the water and sewerage infrastructure to meet current EU Directives relates mainly to the fact that many of the current treatment works need to be upgraded. New treatment processes associated with new technology are often needed to meet the quality standards associated with current EU Directives. Priority is at present being given to upgrading water and wastewater treatment works and it is planned to accelerate spending on network refurbishment within the next few years as the treatment works upgrading programme nears completion.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanisms are used to monitor academy schools; by whom they are inspected; and what sanctions can be applied to them. [208004]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: All Academies receive a monitoring inspection visit from HMI before they are inspected under section 3, deemed 10 arrangements when there is published inspection report. All Academies are inspected within three years of opening, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Academies, like all schools, will be subject to the new national inspection arrangements from September 2005.

The Secretary of State can intervene where an academy is in breach of its funding agreement or where she has concerns about its management or performance. These interventions include appointing additional governors to the governing body, withholding payments to the Academy, appointing auditors or, if necessary by terminating the funding agreement.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which section within her Department is responsible for academy schools; how many staff are involved; and how many are *(a)* civil servants and *(b)* external staff. [208010]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Academies Division within the Department is responsible for Academies. There are currently 70 staff in the Academies Division of whom 45 are civil servants and 25 are external staff. Other staff within the Department also work for some of their time on the Academies Programme, including staff dealing with financial and legal issues and architectural advisers.

Child Care

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has further to subsidise child care places in nurseries in *(a)* deprived areas and *(b)* areas where parents have low incomes; and if she will make a statement. [207244]

Margaret Hodge: The 10-Year Childcare Strategy, published in December 2004, set out the Government's vision for every child to have the best start in life and for parents to have more choice about how to balance work and family life.

Our long-term aim is for affordable, flexible, high quality child care to be available for all families with children under 14. We are making substantial additional investment in early years and child care over the next three years: the Sure Start budget will more than double from this year to 2007–08. This includes a new Transformation Fund of £125 million a year from 2006–07, which will support investment in high quality, affordable and sustainable child care.

Parents on low and middle incomes will continue to have their child care costs subsidised through tax credits. From April 2005 the maximum child care element of the working tax credit will increase from £135 to £175 for one child and from £200 to £300 for two or more children. Eligible parents will be able to claim up to 70 per cent. of these limits; this will increase to 80 per cent. from April 2006. These changes should benefit 20,000 families straight away and many more over time.

From 2006 the 12.5 hour free entitlement to early education for 33 weeks per year will extended to cover 38 weeks a year for all three and four–year-olds. From 2007 the free entitlement will begin to increase to 15 hours per week with all children receiving 15 hours by 2010, as a step towards a goal of 20 hours per week. Parents will have the flexibility to use the free entitlement across a minimum of three days. In addition, we will pilot an extension of free, part time early education to 12,000 two-year-olds in disadvantaged areas by 2008.

We will establish 2,500 children's centres by 2008, and all young children and their families in the most disadvantaged areas will have access to the high quality integrated services children's centres provide. The 10-Year Strategy sets out a commitment to 3,500 centres by 2010—one in every community.

In London, from next year, my Department will be working with the Greater London Authority to test a range of approaches aimed at improving the accessibility and affordability of good quality child care for parents on lower incomes through supply side subsidy. These pilots should benefit more than 10,000 families.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many free *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school places were available for (i) three and (ii) four-years-olds in the North Somerset education authority in each of the last seven years. [207261]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in North Somerset local education authority area is shown in the tables.

Number of free nursery education places taken up 3 and 4-year-olds[1,2]—maintained nursery and primary schools—North Somerset local education authority area 1997–2004—position in January each year

	3-year-olds				4-year-olds			
		Maintained primary schools				Maintained primary schools		
	Maintained nursery schools	Nursery classes	Other classes[3]	Total	Maintained nursery schools	Nursery classes	Other classes[3]	Total
1997	[4]—	160	0	160	[4]—	100	1,410	1,510
1998	[4]—	160	0	160	[4]—	90	1,370	1,460
1999	[4]—	160	0	160	[4]—	80	1,340	1,420
2000	[4]—	200	0	200	[4]—	90	1,380	1,470
2001	[4]—	[5]—	[5]—	200	[4]—	[5]—	[5]—	1,440
2002	[4]—	190	0	190	[4]—	70	1,300	1,370
2003	[4]—	190	0	190	[4]—	80	1,400	1,480
2004	[4]—	160	0	160	[4]—	90	1,370	1,450

[1] Headcount of children aged three and four at 31 December in the previous calendar year.

[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 places.

[3] Includes reception classes and classes not designated as nursery classes.

[4] Not applicable (no maintained nursery schools).

[5] Not available.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Number of free nursery education places taken up 3 and 4-year-olds—maintained schools and private and voluntary providers North Somerset local education authority area 1997–2004—position in January each year

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
	Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	Total	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	Total
1997	160	0	160	[3]—	[3]—	1,800
1998	160	0	160	[3]—	[3]—	2,000
1999	160	0	160	[3]—	[3]—	2,000
2000	200	0	200	[3]—	[3]—	2,200
2001	200	[4]100	300	[3]—	[3]—	2,000
2002	190	[4]950	1,140	1,370	[5]500	1,900
2003	190	[4]1,330	1,520	1,480	[6]540	2,000
2004	160	[7]1,310	1,470	1,460	[8]550	2,000

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Not available

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census supplementary data collection exercise and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[8] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the proposed level of funding for child care provision in schools is for the next three years. [209182]

Margaret Hodge: The Government are committed to supporting the provision of child care in schools as part of the wider extended schools initiative in England. Decisions about the provision of child care in Northern Ireland are made by the Northern Ireland Assembly. In the financial year 2005–06 my Department will be making available just over £107 million to support the development of extended schools, including school based child care. In later years we will provide further funding to support the development of school based child care. An announcement will be made in due course.

In addition to this £14 million from the Young People's Fund element of the Big Lottery Fund has been made available to 78 local authorities over three years from 2004–05 to support the development of extended schools across their areas.

Schools can also charge parents for child care and in turn, parents, who are eligible, can claim part of the cost through the child care element of the working tax credit.

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will include in the forthcoming Education Bill a statutory duty on local authorities to secure sufficient child care provision to meet local needs. [209778]

Margaret Hodge: The 10-year strategy for child care "Choice for parents, the best possible start for children" published on 2 December included the commitment to legislate to place a new duty on local authorities so that over time they will secure sufficient supply of child care places to meet the needs of local families. Local authorities are already key agents for co-ordinating, supporting and delivering child care services and there is a need to confirm the important role they play and clarify their responsibilities in this area. Consultation on the 10 year strategy is due to conclude on 24 February and discussions will be held with local authorities and other stakeholders on the new duty during 2005, with a view to introducing legislation in a future parliamentary session.

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* financial and *(b)* logistical support her Department plans to offer to existing providers of child care (i) to help to ensure their sustainability and (ii) to develop closer links and to align their services with schools. [209779]

Margaret Hodge: For 2004–06 £31 million of sustainability funding is available within the General Sure Start Grant to support child care providers in disadvantaged areas. In addition to this the £170 million Delivery Support Fund element of the Grant can also be used to support all providers experiencing sustainability problems, including pre-school and playgroups.

All existing child care providers can access the support of the dedicated Business Support Officer located within each local authority, for advice and guidance on financial issues and business planning for the future, to ensure long term sustainability.

As announced in our 10-Year Strategy, our long-term aim is for affordable, flexible, high quality child care to be available for all families with children under 14 (under 16 for children with special needs). We are making substantial additional investment in early years and child care over the next three years. This includes a new Transformation Fund of £125 million a year from April 2006, which will support investment in high quality, affordable and sustainable child care.

My Department is providing financial support for the development of extended schools, including the school age child care offer through local authorities. Funding will be used to provide support at school level to enable the delivery of a set of core services including school age child care. We realise that schools cannot deliver the child care offer on their own and we are encouraging them to work in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers and other schools to deliver child care. Local authorities will be able to advise schools of wider groups, agencies and services that are willing to work in partnership to develop extended services.

My Department is also providing logistical support. The Extended Schools Prospectus, which is due to be launched shortly, will set out the vision for extended schools, including child care to schools, local authorities, key stakeholders and the private and voluntary sector. It will draw on the practical experience of schools already delivering services, providing 'how to' advice and case studies on a range of issues, including working with local partners. The prospectus will be available on the teachernet website, so that it can be updated with new issues as they emerge (www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools).

Child Protection

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much was spent on child protection schemes by her Department in each of the last five years, broken down by budget head; and what the forecast budgets are for the next financial year; [207313]

(2) how much was spent by her Department on child protection schemes in each of the last five years, broken down by budget head; and what the forecast budgets are for the next financial year. [207314]

Margaret Hodge: Local authority gross expenditure on children's social services functions is set out in the following tables for the period 1998–99 to 2002–03, the last five years for which expenditure is available.

Gross current expenditure—Children's and Families Services: 1998–99 to 2002–03

	£000
1998–99	2,465,267
1999–2000	2,806,802
2000–01	2,864,584
2001–02	3,119,358
2002–03	3,497,372

Amount spent on children in need—2000–01 to 2002–03[1]

	£000
1998–99	—
1999–2000	—
2000–01	916,667
2001–02	1,154,162
2002–03	1,329,001

[1] Definition changed in 1999–2000 therefore spend before 2000–01 not comparable.

Percentage spend on children in need—2000–01 to 2002–03[1]

	Percentage
1998–99	—
1999–2000	—
2000–01	32
2001–02	37
2002–03	38

[1] Definition changed in 1999–2000 therefore spend before 2000–01 not comparable.

Expenditure will include those in need of protection. Data on Local Authority Personal Social Services expenditure are available at: http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/pss_stat.htm

For 2005–06 the Government are making available £4,284 million for children's social services through formula spending and grants, an increase of 7.6 per cent. on 2004–05. Councils are free to decide how much of these resources to use on child protection services.

In addition, the DfES is responsible for section 64 grants for children's social services. The Secretary of State for Education and Skills, through the Safeguarding Children and Supporting Families Grants Scheme (section 64 of the Health Services and Public Health Act 1968 as amended), has power to make grants to voluntary organisations in England whose activities support the DfES's policy priorities for children's social care. Grants may be paid for up to three years.

The grants are discretionary and terms and conditions agreed by Ministers and HM Treasury apply. Competition for the available funds is always very strong, and priority is given to applications with innovative proposals of national significance that will complement statutory services and so help secure provision of high quality children's social care.

The DfES values its partnership with the voluntary and community sector across the whole of children's social care. Making effective use of Safeguarding Children and Supporting Families Grants and other powers at national and local level is central to this relationship.

The total budget for the Safeguarding Children and Supporting Families Grants Scheme in 2005–06 is £4.2 million including existing grants. Of this, we expect approximately £1.67 million to be available for new grant awards in 2005–06.

Of the 127 applications received in the 2004–05 Round, Minister awarded 47 grants totalling £2.812 million.

Furthermore, the Local Authority Social Services Letter (2003)7 announced the introduction of the Safeguarding Children Specific Formula Grant of £90 million. It also announced a capital grant of £10 million to support the development of information technology systems for children's social services. The £10 million was the first tranche of a total grant of £30 million payable in 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07.

Child Trafficking

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many trafficked children have disappeared from local authority care between 1999 and 2004. [207018]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not held centrally. Current statistics on those children who are absent from their agreed placement may be found in Table J of the DfES Statistical Volume "Children looked after by Local Authorities Year Ending 31 March 2003". This can be downloaded from the internet at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DBA/VOL/v000454/index.shtml and is also available from TSO (the Stationery Office).

This data do not differentiate between the different groups of looked after children.

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many items of civil service property within her Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205575]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following tables detail the items of civil service property unaccounted for (reported as lost or stolen) from the Department for Education and Skills in each year since the Department was established on 11 June 2001.

Financial year 2001-02

Description	Number of items	Approximate value per item (£)	Total approximate value (£)
Laptop PC	3	1,000	3,000
Mobile phone	2	100	200
Video phone	1	200	200
Phone charger	1	25	25
Dictaphone	1	40	40
Chair	1	80	80
Total losses	—	—	3,545

Financial year 2002–03

Description	*Number of items*	*Approximate value per item (£)*	*Total approximate value (£)*
Mobile phone	4	102.50	410
Headphone	1	10	10
Digital Camera	1	200	200
Total losses	—	—	620

Financial year 2003–04

Description	*Number of items*	*Approximate value per item (£)*	*Total approximate value (£)*
PC Chips	94	30	2,820
Data Projector	2	2,760	5,520
Laptop PC	8	1,326.58	10,612.64
Mobile phone	7	91.43	640
Digital voice recorder	1	100	100
PC carrying case	1	30	30
Wall clock	1	5	5
Desk phone	1	113.40	113.40
Total losses	—	—	19,841

Financial year 2004–05

Description	*Number of items*	*Approximate value per item (£)*	*Total approximate value (£)*
Laptop PC	4	1,326.58	5,306.32
Palmtop PDA PC	1	350	350
Scanner cable	1	20	20
Wireless router	1	100	100
Digital camera	1	300	300
Mobile phone	6	33.34	200
Total losses	—	—	6,276

Connexions

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what representations she has received on changes to funding for the Connexions Service in Birmingham and Solihull; [206924]

(2) what assessment she has made of the change in funding formula to be applied to the Connexions Service and the likely impact that this will have in Birmingham and Solihull. [206941]

Margaret Hodge: Letters about the funding of Connexions in Birmingham and Solihull have been received from:

Richard Burden MP on behalf of Mike Bell, former Chief Executive of Connexions Birmingham and Solihull and Valerie Broom of UNISON;

John Taylor MP on behalf of Mike Bell, Simon Field, the Connexions Voluntary Sector Forum Coordinator for Birmingham and Solihull and Councillor Richards,

Leader of Solihull Metropolitan borough council;

Dr. Lynne Jones MP on behalf of Mike Bell and her constituent Jacqui Francis; and

Dr. Ahmed Hassam on behalf of Mike Bell and the Chairs of the West Midlands Connexions Partnerships.

Ministers considered carefully the impact that the changes made to the funding formula in 2004 would have on the Connexions Service in all areas of the country. In 2004–05 we introduced a no cash loss guarantee to ensure that no Connexions Partnership received less in cash terms than it did in 2003–04, and in 2005–06 we will be ensuring that all Partnerships receive a minimum 2 per cent. increase in their core grant allocation. Connexions Birmingham and Solihull will in fact receive an increase of 4.28 per cent. in 2005–06.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent by her Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205597]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department has spent the following on indoor and outdoor bought plants since 1997:

	£
2003–04	12,453
2002–03	6,235
2001–02	6,952
2000–01	11,436
1999–2000	[1]—
1998–99	[1]—
1997–98	[1]—

[1] This information can only be provided at disproportionate costs.

The information regarding indoor and outdoor hired plants is not held centrally and would require a Departmental trawl at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of services and items is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Dudley, North

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of her Department's policy since 1997 on the Dudley, North constituency. [210745]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Dudley, North constituency lies within Dudley local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE/GNVQ achievement for pupils attending schools in Dudley, North are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Dudley North constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Dudley North—English	53.4	72.7	19.3
Dudley North—Maths	49.2	65.1	15.9
National Average—English	63	78	15
National Average—Maths	61	74	13

GCSE/GNVQ[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Dudley North constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Dudley North—5+ A*-C	35.7	42.7	7.0
Dudley North—5+ A*-G	85.9	88.1	2.2
Dudley North—1+ A*-G	91.6	93.9	2.3
National average—5+ A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5+ A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National average—1+ A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs. GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' web site available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including literacy and numeracy at age 11, literacy and numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, pupils with special educational needs, school initiatives, school workforce, school funding and resources, children's social services, early years, class sizes, post 16, higher education and adult education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In Your Area' website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about adult education, school funding, school initiatives, school performance, school workforce and post 16.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years are in receipt of education maintenance allowance in the West Midlands region. [209733]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: By the end of December 2004, 35,679 young people in the West Midlands region had received one or more EMA payment.

Examination Results

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of 16 to 18 year old A-level candidates achieved at least three A grades at A2 level in *(a)* maintained schools, *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* other further education colleges in the most recent year for which figures are available. [210175]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on the proportion of 16 to 18 year old candidates achieving at least three A grades at GCE/VCE A level[1] in 2003/04 is given as follows.

[1] A VCE Double Award at grade AA counts as two grade As and a grade AB as one. AS levels, which usually count as half an A level, are not included in this table.

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
All maintained schools	7.3	8.1	7.7
Sixth form colleges	6.4	7.7	7.1
Other FE sector colleges	2.0	2.3	2.2

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per candidate aged 16 to 18 years in *(a)* maintained schools, *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* other further education colleges was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [210176]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on the average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per candidate aged 16 to 18 years in 2003–04 is given as follows:

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
All Maintained Schools	260.2	282.2	271.9
Sixth Form Colleges	262.8	295.5	280.7
Other FE Sector Colleges	173.5	197.5	186.7

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in maintained schools *(a)* with and *(b)* without a sixth form achieved five or more grades A*-G at GCSE in 2003/04. [210185]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Figures for 2004 indicate that 91.8 per cent. of 15-year-old pupils in maintained mainstream schools with sixth forms achieved five or more grades A*-G at GCSE and equivalent compared with 89.7 per cent. of those in schools without sixth forms.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per candidate aged 16 to 18 years in maintained school sixth forms containing *(a)* fewer than 25, *(b)* 25–50, *(c)* 50–75, *(d)* 75–100, *(e)* 100–125, *(f)* 125–150 and *(g)* more than 150 pupils was in the last year for which figures are available. [210191]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on GCE/VCE A/AS point score per candidate aged 16 to 18 years in maintained school sixth forms in 2003–04 is given as follows:

Number of students aged 16 to 18	*2003–04*
24 and below	180.6
25 to 49	184.7
50 to 74	195.9
75 to 99	205.0
100 to 124	221.1
125 to 149	231.6
150 and above	282.5
All Institutions	271.9

Extended Schools

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to provide child care in extended schools. [201094]

Margaret Hodge: The Government's 10-year strategy Choice for Parents, the Best Start for Children, published on 2 December, sets out our commitment to give every child the best start in life and to ensure that parents have real choice about how to balance work and family life. Our long term investment includes a guarantee of child care being available from 8 am to 6 pm, all year round, for all parents of children aged five to 11. The guarantee will help the very varied needs of children and families. Obviously we do not expect most children to spend all their time in school when schools are open for longer, but parents will be able to choose hours which meet their needs and the needs of their children. We expect at least half of parents to benefit from this offer by 2008, and all by 2010. By 2008, at least a third of all secondary schools will be open from 8 am to 6 pm, all year round offering a range of activities for 11 to 14 year olds. By 2010, all secondary schools will be part of a network offering this provision. Provision could be available in a local school, in a neighbouring school or on a different site, provided by the school or in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers, including local childminders.

Foreign Language Teachers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* applicants and *(b)* acceptanees there were for university courses in modern foreign languages, (i) not combined with and (ii) combined with non-language subjects in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [207937]

Dr. Howells: Our national languages strategy emphasises the importance of encouraging students in higher education to take an active part in learning modern foreign languages and we shall continue to pursue this aim.

The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers all applicants and accepted applicants to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK. Figures are in the table.

Applicants and acceptances through UCAS to modern foreign languages

	Not combined with non-language subjects		Combined with non-language subjects[1]	
Year of entry	Applicants	Acceptances[2]	Applicants	Acceptances[2]
1999	6,586	7,639	6,709	8,133
2000	5,970	7,170	6,614	8,063
2001	5,823	6,885	7,107	8,476
2002[3]	6,179	7,516	10,654	14,170
2003[3]	6,004	7,249	10,737	14,275

[1] Includes combinations of languages (including classical languages) with law, social studies, business studies, humanities, art and education. Combinations of languages with science subjects cannot be easily identified separately. Does not include combinations of three subjects.

[2] Acceptances may be larger than applicants as acceptance figures include students who did not achieve their first choice course and it includes those students accepted through clearing.

[3] For entry in 2002 onwards, the subjects are classified using the joint academic coding system (JACS) which differs to the method used in previous years (HESACODE).

Source

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Sixth Form and Further Education

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the per capita funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in Milton Keynes was in *(a)* school sixth forms and *(b)* further education colleges in each of the last five years. [210748]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council. The Department does not collect information on the level of per capita funding for 16 to 19- year-olds in school sixth forms and further education colleges at the local level. Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with details of the level of per capita funding for 16 to 19-year-olds in *(a)* school sixth forms and *(b)* further education colleges in each of the last five years in the Milton Keynes area. A copy of his letter will be placed in the House Library.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost is per pupil of education in *(a)* maintained school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* other further education colleges; and what projections her Department has made for funding per pupil over the next five years in each of these types of establishment. [210177]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Further Education funding system is different to schools. Funding is paid for learning aims as well as an entitlement per 16 to 18 payment.

Under the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) funding formula the basic cost to the public purse of delivering three A-levels in a sixth form college and a further education college to a student in the 2004/05 academic year will be £3,045. This figure comprises £766 for the delivery of each A-level learning aim, and £747 for each student for the entitlement element of their learning programme.

Under the LSC's funding formula the basic cost to the public purse of delivering three A-levels to a student at an English maintained secondary school will be £3,212. This figure comprises £785 for the delivery of each A-level learning aim, £750 for each student for the entitlement element of their learning programme, and £107 for each student to meet additional employers' contributions to teachers' pensions.

These figures do not represent all funding that colleges and school sixth forms receive and are not directly comparable. For example the further education funding rates include consolidated funds for pay and staff training that are not reflected in the school sixth form rates. Also, in each case additional funding may also be available to take account of the higher costs of delivering learning in particular geographical areas, in higher cost subjects, or to students with particular disadvantages or individual needs.

It is expected that base funding rates per qualification will be increased by 4 per cent. for school sixth forms and by 5 per cent. for further education colleges, on a broadly comparable basis, in 2005/06. LSC will decide funding rates for each academic year nearer the time in light of the funding it has available and where priorities lie.

The Department is discussing with the LSC how to take forward the next stage of the Skills Strategy from 2006/07, including the roll out of a National Employer Training Programme, and more broadly how the increases in funding from the 2004 Spending Review are applied, and until those discussions are concluded it will not be possible to set out precise forecasts of FE funding per learner.

GCSEs and A-levels

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have entered *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level examinations in each year since 1997 in (i) Hartlepool and (ii) England and Wales for the following subjects (A) English, (B) mathematics, (C) history and (D) a foreign language. [210647]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is shown in the following tables. Figures for Wales are a matter for the Welsh Assembly.

Table 1: GCSE attempts of 15-year-old pupils in selected subjects 1997–2004

	Hartlepool			
Academic year	*English*	*Mathemetics*	*History*	*Any modern foreign language*
1996/97	949	990	465	567
1997/98	1,023	1,063	458	798
1998/99	1,050	1,073	331	829
1999/2000	1,120	1,155	317	791
2000/01	1,175	1,192	419	825
2001/02	1,154	1,170	341	792
2002/03	1,218	1,248	315	831
2003/04	1,188	1,250	392	729

	England			
Academic year	*English*	*Mathematics*	*History*	*Any modern foreign language*
1996/97	533,348	533,992	207,486	432,459
1997/98	519,983	526,882	189,070	444,704
1998/99	530,173	536,779	188,934	455,385
1999/2000	533,227	539,934	190,279	459,379
2000/01	555,392	563,852	195,231	473,393
2001/02	560,199	568,851	193,945	461,460
2002/03	577,427	585,017	194,801	453,914
2003/04	597,611	605,980	205,533	437,163

Table 2: Number of 16 to 18-year-old GCE A level candidates in selected subjects 1997–2004

	Hartlepool			
Academic year	*English*	*Mathematics*	*History*	*Any modern foreign language*
1996/97	105	52	54	32
1997/98	93	56	52	29
1998/99	78	56	34	25
1999/2000	98	65	36	11
2000/01	104	83	43	17
2001/02	92	44	52	17
2002/03	86	58	55	25
2003/04	95	64	55	21

	England			
Academic year	*English*	*Mathematics*	*History*	*Any modern foreign language*
1996/97	80,003	55,789	36,078	32,997
1997/98	80,312	56,529	34,437	31,346
1998/99	77,610	56,030	33,406	29,915
1999/2000	74,740	53,637	33,140	26,981
2000/01	74,445	54,049	33,831	26,918
2001/02	76,877	44,169	35,511	24,375
2002/03	77,270	44,531	36,513	23,703
2003/04	78,484	46,126	38,156	23,489

Home Carers Scheme

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many nannies have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* received Government accreditation via the home carers scheme. [204405]

Margaret Hodge: The Government do not have a breakdown of the occupations of those who have *(a)* applied for; and *(b)* received accreditation via the home child carers' scheme.

A new Childcare Approval Scheme was announced on 8 December. This will allow for the approval of child care provided in the child's home or, for children over the age of seven, on other domestic premises. Carers will be able to apply for approval from 4 January 2005. By using an approved carer parents have been able to access financial support through the child care element of the working tax credit or through employer supported child care. Parents who are eligible will be able to claim financial support from 6 April 2005. The new scheme will provide parents with more flexible, affordable, opportunities for home based care.

Homelessness

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will permit homeless children in temporary accommodation to be included in groups of socially excluded children targeted by the Vulnerable Children Grant. [209649]

Margaret Hodge: The Government's aim is that all vulnerable children should be able to access good quality education. The Standards Fund Vulnerable Children Grant was introduced in the 2003–04 financial year to help local education authorities (LEAs) to achieve this aim.

The key groups whose needs the Vulnerable Children Grant is designed to address are: looked after children; children who are unable to attend school because of medical needs; gypsy/traveller children; asylum seekers, young carers, school refusers, teenage parents and young offenders. This list is not prescriptive or exclusive. Many of these children will face multiple challenges, sometimes including homelessness. The grant may be used by LEAs to meet the needs of any vulnerable children identified by them as needing support, including those who are homeless. This discretionary approach allows local needs to be addressed more flexibly and responsively than would be possible using central direction.

In November last year the Department published an evaluation of the Vulnerable Children Grant undertaken by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). One of the key findings of the report was that the grant had enabled LEAs to provide support for a variety of vulnerable groups. The NFER reported that in some LEAs surveyed the grant had been used to support children who are socially vulnerable, for example children living in vulnerable accommodation such as women's refuges, or children who were the subject of family breakdown or changes in home circumstances.

ICT

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of how much time will be required of teachers to fill in the route map for information and communication technology use. [210180]

Derek Twigg: We have recently asked the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency to develop a route-map for schools which will help each school to identify how they can move forward in embedding information and communication technology to support teaching and learning.

The route map will not involve any requirement on teachers to fill in anything.

Key Stage 4

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average value added scores at Key Stage 4 are for *(a)* maintained school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges, *(c)* further education colleges and *(d)* special schools. [210186]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Figures[1,2] are unavailable for Parts *(a)*, *(b)* and *(c)* of the question as the GCSE and Equivalents[2] value added measures are based on pupils aged 151 at the start of the academic year. Maintained school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges do not have 15-year-old pupils on roll, except in rare individual cases. Figures are provided for special schools[3] *(d)* as follows:

The Key Stage 2—Age 15[1,2] value added measure is 1019.4 for special schools[3] in 2004.

The Key Stage 3—Age 151[2] value added measure is 1022.5 for special schools[3] in 2004.

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[1] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

[2] 2004 results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16.

[3] 'Special schools' include Community special schools, Foundation special schools, Special schools not maintained by LEA and Independent schools approved to take pupils with Special Education Needs.

New Deal for Schools

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding each school in Stoke-on-Trent has received from the new deal for schools. [209910]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The funding for new deal for schools allocated to Stoke-on-Trent from 1997–98 to 2000–01 is set out in the following table:

Stoke-on-Trent LEA	*£000*
1997–98	650
1998–99	2,799
1999–2000	1,753
2000–01	3,123

Decisions on detailed allocations to individual schools were made locally by the LEA. The breakdown of funds allocated to schools by constituency is not held centrally.

Newborn Hearing Screening

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what monitoring he conducts of local authority provision of support for families of deaf children identified through newborn hearing screening; [201674]

(2) what entitlement deaf children identified through newborn hearing screening and under the age of two years have to support from qualified teachers of the deaf. [201675]

Margaret Hodge: The Children Act 2004 introduces new requirements for integrated inspections of children's services. Proposals will be published soon for public consultation. Joint Area Reviews will make judgments about how services collectively improve the well-being of all children, including disabled children. Ofsted will work closely with the Healthcare Commission, the Commission for Social Care Inspection and other inspectorates to carry out integrated inspections.

In May 2003, we published guidance for local education authorities in relation to early support for deaf children and their families. This guidance covered the aims of education service provision and the contribution which qualified teachers of the deaf could make, working alongside health and other professionals.

Since then, additional material has been made available through our Early Support Programme. This includes a monitoring protocol to check the progress which deaf children make in the first three years or so after deafness has been identified, an information booklet on deafness for parents and a service audit tool for supporting the development and improvement of services for disabled children under three and their families.

Nursery Places

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many three and four-year-olds in Leyton and Wanstead have benefited from the scheme guaranteeing a free part-time nursery place. [208771]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Leyton and Wanstead parliamentary constituency and Redbridge local education authority area is shown in the tables. Information for private and voluntary providers is available for Redbridge but not for Leyton and Wanstead.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places taken up 3 and 4-year-olds Redbridge local education authority area

Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[1]	*Other maintained and independent private, voluntary and providers*[2]	*Total 3-year-olds*
1997	690	n/a	690
1998	820	n/a	820
1999	1,300	n/a	1,300
2000	1,600	n/a	1,600
2001	1,600	850	2,500
2002	1,700	610	2,300
2003	1,600	850	2,450
2004	1,600	750	2,400

n/a = Not available.

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

4-year-olds

Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools*[1]	*Other maintained and independent private, voluntary and providers*[2]	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	n/a	n/a	2,900
1998	n/a	n/a	3,100
1999	n/a	n/a	3,200
2000	n/a	n/a	3,200
2001	n/a	n/a	3,400
2002	2,700	510	3,200
2003	2,700	520	3,300
2004	2,600	450	3,100

n/a = Not available

[1] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up[2] 3 and 4-year-olds in maintained nursery and primary schools Leyton and Wanstead parliamentary constituency area

Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery schools*	*Maintained primary schools*		*Total 3-year-olds*
		Nursery classes	*Other classes*[3]	
1997	50	440	0	490
1998	40	440	0	480
1999	60	460	0	520
2000	50	540	0	590
2001	40	550	0	590
2002	80	530	0	610
2003	70	430	30	530
2004	50	540	0	590

Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery schools*	*Maintained primary schools*		*Total 4-year-olds*
		Nursery classes	*Other classes*[3]	
1997	40	630	440	1110
1998	50	620	430	1100
1999	40	610	440	1100
2000	40	600	420	1100
2001	50	560	480	1100
2002	30	490	440	960
2003	40	490	470	1000
2004	30	480	440	960

[1] Headcount of children aged three and four at 31 December in the previous calendar year

[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate

[3] Includes reception classes and classes not designated as nursery classes.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Out-of-classroom Learning

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment her Department has made of the merits of supporting research into the costs and benefits of out-of-classroom learning; and if she will make a statement; [209284]

(2) what assessment she has made of the role of out-of-classroom learning in increasing (*a*) physical activity and (*b*) inclusivity among school children; and if she will make a statement; [209285]

(3) what practical steps will be taken to increase opportunities (*a*) within the curriculum and (*b*) outside the school day for trips and visits for school children as identified in her Department's five year strategy; and if she will make a statement; [209286]

(4) what guidance has been given to academies in relation to the promotion of outdoor learning; [209287]

(5) if her Department will asked Ofsted to conduct a special survey of outdoor education in all schools; [209539]

(6) what plans her Department has to commission further research into the contribution of (*a*) outdoor education and (*b*) biology fieldwork to the curriculum; and if she will make a statement; [209540]

(7) what steps she has taken to ensure that all students experience the benefits of outdoor education as identified in the recent Ofsted report, and if she will make a statement. [209541]

(8) what recent discussions she has had with the teaching unions regarding their position on educational visits, and if she will make a statement. [209542]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Over the past few years the Department has both commissioned and jointly funded external studies to examine benefits and potential barriers for outdoor education: outdoor learning, including fieldwork; out-of-classroom learning, including museums and galleries and residential experiences; and out-of-hours learning. We may commission further research into specific aspects of some or all of these. We have no plans to ask Ofsted to survey outdoor education in all schools. We have not made an assessment of the role of out-of-classroom learning in increasing physical activity or inclusivity in schools. We have not sent any guidance to Academies on outdoor learning.

We are in talks with the NASUWT regarding their long-standing concerns about out of classroom safety. In particular, we are investigating with them what else we could do to help local authorities and schools ensure that investigations following pupil accidents are fair to school staff, as well as to pupils and their parents. The National Curriculum has statutory requirements in PE and geography for all pupils to experience learning outside the classroom. We are developing further practical steps to encourage schools to expand provision for all pupils, across and beyond the National Curriculum, including trips and visits.

Pupil to Teacher Ratios

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out (*a*) for the London borough of Redbridge and (*b*) for the London borough of Waltham Forest, for 1997 and 2004, (i) the pupil to teacher ratio and (ii) the pupil to teacher plus classroom assistant ratio. [209017]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested are shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1] – pupil to teacher ratio[2] and pupil to adult ratio[3] 1997 and 2004 – position in January each year

	1997	*2004*
London borough of Redbridge		
Primary		
Pupil to teacher ratio	22.9	23.3
Pupil to adult ratio	18.7	13.7
Secondary		
Pupil to teacher ratio	16.5	16.9
Pupil to adult ratio	14.1	12.9
London borough of Waltham Forest		
Primary		
Pupil to teacher ratio	21.7	25.2
Pupil to adult ratio	17.3	13.5
Secondary		
Pupil to teacher ratio	15.6	16.6
Pupil to adult ratio	13.0	11.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

[2] The pupil to teacher ratio is calculated by dividing the total FTE number of pupils on roll by the total FTE number of qualified teachers regularly employed in schools

[3] The pupil to adult ratio is calculated by dividing the total FTE number of pupils on roll by the total FTE number of all teachers and support staff employed in schools, excluding administrative and clerical staff

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on the effect of pupil ratios on the allocation of funding to schools. [210130]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: None.

Schools Infrastructure

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish regular information on the number of (*a*) schools and (*b*) children's centres that have been built, rebuilt or remodelled in each of the Department's programmes. [209448]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We do not have this information across all of our programmes and have no plans to publish it. All local authorities and schools receive support for capital investment from us for their priority needs. In the main, we do not specify how they must invest it; they decide this on the basis of local asset management plans. We do not collect information about these local decisions, in order to keep administrative burdens to an acceptable level. Detailed information should be held locally.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set intermediate targets for the number of secondary schools to be improved in the Building Schools for the Future programme. [209449]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We aim to deliver Building Schools for the Future within 10 to 15 years from 2005-06, subject to future public spending decisions. The projects announced from the spending review 2004 will renew an estimated 380 secondary schools. We do not intend to set targets for schools to be included beyond each spending review period.

We will also support improvements to other secondary schools over the next three years through devolved formula capital allocations to every school, formulaic allocations to every local authority, the Academies programme, the Targeted Capital Fund, and the new joint 16-19 capital budget.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition she uses of the term 21st century schools in the Building Schools for the Future programme. [209450]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Building Schools for the Future is the practical application of the Government's commitment to transform secondary education, and will help ensure that secondary pupils in every part of England learn in 21st century facilities.

To demonstrate what this could mean, we developed exemplar designs for schools fit for the 21st century. The exemplars show how to create high quality, modern school buildings with the latest integrated ICT systems. They show how to provide attractive, imaginative and stimulating environments, which are also safe and secure places for children to learn in. These are some of the requirements that are needed in a school for the future. They should also be inclusive, so that no child is left out and all can achieve their full potential, and be open to wider use, strengthening schools connection with their local communities. Overall, the transformation of the secondary school estate will help to raise standards and will play a crucial part in our ambitious programme of educational reform.

Secure Units

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the local authority secure units which have closed since 2000; and what the bed capacity of each was at the time of closure. [209277]

Margaret Hodge: The local authority secure children's homes which have closed since 31 March 2000 are in the following table along with the approved number of residents at time of closure.

Secure children's homes	*Number of residents*
Briars Hey	8
Brunel	8
Dales House	8
Stamford House	26
Stoke House	14
Thornbury House	7

SEN and Disability Tribunal

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many claims of unlawful discrimination have been *(a)* received and *(b)* cleared in favour of the claimant by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal in England in each year since 2002; and if she will make a statement. [208112]

Margaret Hodge: In the school year 2002/03 the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST) received 104 claims of discrimination and registered 78 of these. The other 26 fell outside the Tribunal's powers. In 2003/04 it received 108 claims and registered 81.

The SENDIST decided 14 cases in 2002/03 and upheld three of these. In 2003/04 it decided 69 claims and upheld 21.

Sex Education

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what rights parents have to withdraw their children from sex education in schools; and what steps her Department takes to inform parents of these rights. [210692]

Derek Twigg: Parents have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the sex and relationship education (SRE) provided at school, except for those parts included in the statutory science curriculum.

Guidance issued to schools in July 2000 makes it clear that parents have the right to withdraw, and emphasises the importance of schools working in partnership with parents. The Department has also published a leaflet for parents setting out their rights in relation to SRE. The leaflet is available on the Department's website at www.dfes.gov.uk/sreandparents and in hard copy for schools to distribute to parents.

Special Needs

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provision is being made to enable North Yorkshire schools to meet their special needs requirements and to ensure that their inclusion policy is adequately funded. [208543]

Margaret Hodge: The majority of funding for schools is distributed according to a locally agreed formula which will include factors for SEN and deprivation. Most pupils with SEN are in mainstream schools and are funded through their authority's local funding formula. This enables schools to intervene early and make good arrangements to meet children's needs while ensuring that these pupils are fully included. It is for local authorities to decide how best to distribute their funding.

Up to 2003–04 a grant for special educational needs was paid to all local education authorities through the Standards Fund; North Yorkshire's allocation was £788,153; of which 50 per cent. was government grant and 50 per cent. contributed by the local authority. In 2004–05, this allocation was increased by 4 per cent. to £819,679 for North Yorkshire. In 2004–05 a number of previously separate grants for schools including the grant for SEN were brought together within a single grant—the School Development Grant. This grant is allocated to schools to use for any purpose to promote school improvement, including special educational needs. In 2003–04 LEAs could retain 50 per cent. of the SEN grant for central support for special educational needs. In 2004–05, LEAs are allowed to retain the same cash amount from their schools development grant for these purposes.

Specialist Schools (England)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many specialist schools there are in England; how many are in areas within the most deprived 20 per cent. of wards according to the Government's index of deprivation; and what specialisms have been chosen by the schools situated in those areas. [209788]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: The information requested is shown in the tables.

(i) Number of specialist schools—maintained secondary[1] and special

	Number of schools	*Number of specialist schools*	*Percentage of specialist schools*
England			
Secondary	3,385	1,936	57
Special	1,063	19	1.8
Total	448	1,955	1,955
20% Most Deprived Areas			
Secondary	578	293	50.7
Special	238	6	2.5
Total	816	299	36.6

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed

(ii) Number of specialist schools by specialism

	All Schools		*Schools in 20% Most Deprived Areas*	
Specialism	*Number of specialist schools*	*Specialism (Percentage)*	*Number of specialist schools*	*Specialism (Percentage)*
Arts	304	15.5	49	16.4
Business and Enterprise	146	7.5	30	10.0
Business and Enterprise and Arts[6]	2	0.1	0	—
Engineering	35	1.8	6	2.0
Engineering and Business and Enterprise	1	0.1	0	—
Humanities	18	0.9	4	1.3
Humanities and Arts	1	0.1	0	—
Humanities and Business and Enterprise	2	0.1	0	—
Language	202	10.3	26	8.7
Language and Arts	1	0.1	1	0.3
Language and Business and Enterprise	1	0.1	0	—
Maths and Computing	153	7.8	19	6.4
Maths and Computing and Engineering	1	0.1	0	—
Maths and Computing and Humanities	1	0.1	0	—
Maths and Computing and Languages	1	0.1	0	—
Maths and Computing with Enterprise	1	0.1	0	—
Music	5	0.3	0	—
Music and Maths and Computing	1	0.1	0	
Science	225	11.5	27	9.0
Science and Arts	5	0.3	0	—
Science and Engineering	5	0.3	2	0.7
Science and Maths and Computing	6	0.3	0	—
Sports	283	14.5	52	17.4
Sports and Arts	1	0.1	0	—
Sports and Business and Enterprise	1	0.1	0	—
Sports and Science	2	0.1	1	0.3
Technology	546	27.9	81	27.1
Technology and Arts	2	0.1	1	0.3
Technology and Engineering	3	0.2	0	—
Total	1,955	100.0	299	100.0

Student Support

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will assess the merits of a single system of student support based on intensity of study. [209236]

Dr. Howells: There are no plans to adopt a single system of general support based on intensity of study. However, changes we are introducing for the 2005/06 academic year will pro-rate the amount of fee support that a part-time student receives to the intensity of their part-time study. This Government are the only one to have provided support for part-time students. Prior to academic year 1998/99 no financial support of any kind was available to them. Since then we have introduced schemes which have enabled some part-time students to have their tuition fees met, to qualify for disabled students' allowances and to take out loans to cover course costs. In 2004/05 a new package of grants was introduced and this is being improved on further in 2005/06.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the extent to which support for part-time students takes account of the costs of *(a)* travel, *(b)* child care and *(c)* lost income. [209237]

Dr. Howells: The Department for Education and Skills commissioned the Open University to carry out a survey into the incomes of and costs incurred by part-time higher education students while studying. The survey found that, excluding course fees, students faced extra costs of on average £246 per year. This is slightly less than the maximum course grant of £250 which is available to part-time students.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures the Government has taken since the Higher Education Act 2004 to support part-time students. [209241]

Dr. Howells: The Government are building upon the improved support for part-time students, which was introduced in academic year 2004/05, by increasing the amount of fee grant that a student may get in academic year 2005/06. There will be three maximum fee grants rates of £590, £710 and £885 for students who are studying at 50 per cent. or more of an equivalent full-time course with the highest rate applying to those who study at 75 per cent. or more FTE. The threshold below which students can get both the fee grant and the £250 course grant in full is also being increased from £14,600 in 2004/05 to £14,970 in 2005/06.

Sure Start

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans he has to transfer responsibility for administering Sure Start to county councils after 2006. [201043]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 30 November 2004]:* Before April 2006, we will be discussing with local authorities and Sure Start local programmes how to ensure that the high quality services and successful ways of working pioneered by the Sure Start programmes can be maintained as local authorities take on increasing responsibility for planning of children's services. We expect that all local programmes will be administered through local authorities by April 2008.

We have no plans to remove the national ring fence from the Sure Start budget before 2008. However, some local removal of the ring fence will be piloted from 2005 as part of the Local Area Agreement pilots.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to ring fence the funding for Sure Start programmes in Kent when the funding arrangements are moved to Kent county council. [208426]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Kent county council (CC) is taking part in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) pilot from April 2005 and as such will be able to request the inclusion of Sure Start local programme revenue funding as part of the children's services block of the LAA. As part of the LAA, Sure Start local programme funding would not be ring fenced.

Sure Start funding will however only be considered for inclusion in LAAs where areas can demonstrate that outputs will support Sure Start and the other targets in the 10 year childcare strategy. Kent CC will also be expected to continue to involve parents, children and community groups in the planning and delivery of services, and that will be reflected in the assessment of their performance. If Kent decide not to include Sure Start local programme funding within the local area agreement then the Sure Start local programmes revenue grant will be paid to the programmes' accountable bodies as in earlier years.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of Sure Start in reaching homeless families with children in temporary accommodation; and if she will make a statement. [209648]

Margaret Hodge: Sure Start Local Programmes are area-based programmes bringing together health and family support services with play, learning and child care opportunities to give young children living in the 20 per cent. most disadvantaged communities the best possible start in life. Some programmes with large numbers of homeless families in their catchment areas have specifically targeted the needs of homeless families, for example by providing play and advice sessions for children living in temporary accommodation.

The experience of local programmes and other services has shown that Sure Start, with its combination of universal and targeted services and focus on outreach, has been effective in reaching groups such as homeless families who often fall through the service network. By providing them with information and support, services encourage such groups to access services. Many Sure Start services have also supported mainstream services to reach out to and be more responsive to the particular needs of homeless families.

A major evaluation of Sure Start Local Programmes began in January 2001. This is looking at: the impact of the programme in the short, medium and long-term; access and quality of services; and its cost-effectiveness. One aspect will be to assess the outreach and home visiting services in place within programmes and the methods being developed to meet the needs of hard-to-reach families. Information will be available in summer 2005.

The Government's 10-year strategy for child care, announced in December 2004, aims to provide every family with easy access to integrated services through children's centres and extended schools in their local community. They will build on the success of Local Programmes and other initiatives for young children and families. 2,500 centres will be in place by 2008, and 3,500 by 2010. They will be proactive in reaching out to ensure that families who do not access services readily, including homeless families, nonetheless receive the help and support they need.

The Sure Start Unit is continuing to develop approaches for piloting, from April 2006, ways of ensuring that particularly disadvantaged 2-year-old children, including homeless children, receive Sure Start services.

Transformation Fund

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what the annual £125 million Transformation Fund announced in the pre-Budget report will be allocated from 2006. [209774]

Margaret Hodge: The 10-year child-care strategy, published in December 2004, set out the Government's vision for every child to have the best start in life and for parents to have more choice about how to balance work and family life. Our long term aim is for affordable, flexible, high quality child care to be available for all families with children under 14. We are making substantial additional investment in early years and child care over the next three years: the Sure Start budget will more than double from this year to 2007–08. This includes a new Transformation Fund of £125 million a year from 2006–07.

The aim of the Transformation Fund is to ensure a more sustainable approach to investment in child care. The fund will be distributed to local authorities from April 2006. The fund will complement the child care funding already available and support investment by local authorities in high quality, affordable, flexible and sustainable child care provision.

Options for making best possible use of this additional revenue are currently under discussion. We are reviewing the domestic and international experience of investing to support the quality and sustainability of child care, and the lessons learned will be used to inform decisions on how the Transformation Fund should be spent. An announcement will be made in due course.

World Darts Championship

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent advertising at the World Professional Darts Championships. [207886]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: My Department did not spend any money on advertising at the World Darts Championship. However, £6,167 was spent on the provision of promotional materials to encourage darts fans to phone the National Learning Advice Line and find out about courses to improve their maths and English skills. The materials were part of the Department's ongoing campaign to promote adult literacy, language and numeracy skills.

PRIME MINISTER

Bahrain

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met the King of Bahrain; and if he will make a statement. [210727]

The Prime Minister: I last met the King of Bahrain on 1 January 2005. We discussed a wide range of issues including UK/Bahrain relations and regional issues.

Baronetcies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister if he will re-consider his decision on continuance of the practice of recommendations to the Queen on the creation of hereditary baronetcies. [210677]

The Prime Minister: No.

Congressional Medal of Honour

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Prime Minister when he intends to collect his Congressional Medal of Honour. [210598]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Lewes (Mr. Baker) on 18 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 878W.

Engagements

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Prime Minister how many times he met Lord Irvine on 12 June 2003; and what was discussed. [209696]

The Prime Minister: I have regular meetings and discussions with ministerial colleagues and others on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed.

EU Presidency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Prime Minister what the Government's priorities for the European Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the Council of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [209558]

The Prime Minister: The overall Council agenda for 2005 is set out in the UK/Luxembourg Annual Operating Programme, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House. It is too early to determine which particular issues from the this overall agenda will be discussed at the European Council.

European Commissioner for External Trade

Mr. Drew: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions he has held with the European Commissioner for External Trade on additional roles he has been asked to perform for the European Commission outside his portfolio responsibilities. [208926]

The Prime Minister: I have regular discussions with the European Commissioner for External Trade on all aspects of European business.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Prime Minister what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his office in the last three years. [207815]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Constitutional Affairs today.

India

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to visit India during the term of the UK's presidency of the G8. [210422]

The Prime Minister: I plan to visit India during the UK's presidency of the EU.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister which Ministers were informed about the United States military planning document on the Iraq war which contained references to P-day, A-day and G-day; and on what dates. [210734]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1771W.

Middle East

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how he plans to take forward the G8 initiative on the Arab world which began at Atlanta, Georgia. [210728]

The Prime Minister: As part of our efforts to encourage political, social and economic reform in the Middle East, we will work with our G8 and regional partners during our G8 presidency to ensure implementation of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Plan of Support agreed last year.

Serbia and Montenegro

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister what the main conclusions were of his meeting with the President of Serbia and Montenegro on Monday 17 January. [210231]

The Prime Minister: I discussed a wide range of issues with the President of Serbia and Montenegro at our meeting on 17 January, including the need for full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and for Belgrade to engage constructively with UNMIK (UN Mission in Kosovo) and the PISG (Provisional Institutions of Self Government) for both immediate and long-term stability. We also discussed how best to support further contacts between UK and Serbia and Montenegro companies to facilitate further trade and investment.

Official Residences

Mr. Heald: To ask the Prime Minister which official residences may be occupied by Ministers; and which residences have been occupied by *(a)* Ministers, staff and their families and *(b)* others in each year since 2000. [210421]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Epsom and Ewell (Chris Grayling) of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1037W.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the special advisers who accompanied him on each of his visits abroad between *(a)* 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 and *(b)* 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [210569]

The Prime Minister: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. Copies of these lists are available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of officials accompanying me on overseas visits is included in the list. All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers, and the Civil Service Management Code.

UN Charter on the Rights of the Child

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Prime Minister what discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* other Ministers have had with the United States Administration about ratification of the UN Charter on the Rights of the Child. [210289]

The Prime Minister: The United States signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on 16 February 1995. The current Administration has made clear that it does not intend to ratify it. Neither I nor other Ministers have raised the Convention with our US counterparts. We have regularly supported EU-sponsored resolutions on the Rights of the Child at the UN General Assembly and Commission on Human Rights.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Angela Cannings

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason Angela Cannings was refused *(a)* compensation and *(b)* an ex gratia payment for wrongful conviction and imprisonment; and if he will make a statement. [208513]

Paul Goggins: Angela Cannings did not meet the criteria set out within the provisions of section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 for a statutory payment of compensation for her wrongful conviction. Nor did she meet the criteria for an ex gratia payment of compensation under the terms of the then Home Secretary's statement to the House of Commons on 29 November 1985, *Official Report*, columns 691–92.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the effect of having separate definitions of antisocial behaviour in the Housing Act 1996 and the Crime and Disorder Act 1999. [204534]

Ms Blears: Antisocial behaviour is defined in the Part 1 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 for the purposes of seeking Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) as behaviour that is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress. For the purposes of seeking a Housing Injunction under Section 153A of the Housing Act 1996 antisocial behaviour is defined as conduct which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance. It is important to note that both definitions relate specifically to these legislative measures and are not to be taken as general definitions of what constitutes anti-social behaviour.

Both definitions are wide enough to encompass most practitioners own understanding of antisocial behaviour and are designed to ensure that these legislative measures can be applied to tackle a broad range of antisocial conduct.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidelines his Department has given to agencies on assessing whether behaviour is anti-social. [204536]

Ms Blears: While there are no fixed guidelines the key to categorising behaviour as antisocial must be in consideration of its impact on others. The term 'antisocial behaviour' includes a variety of behaviour covering a whole complex of selfish and unacceptable activity that can blight the quality of community life. Other terms such as 'nuisance', 'neighbour disputes' and 'disorder' are also used to describe some of this behaviour. A legal definition of behaving in an antisocial manner is found in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; this definition is used in relation to anti-social behaviour orders. The definition of antisocial behaviour being

> "that is to say in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself".

Many agencies tackling antisocial behaviour have adopted this definition for more general purposes.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures he has in place to keep track of people waiting for asylum applications to be processed. [209366]

Mr. Browne: As part of the initial screening process asylum seekers are required to provide proof of residence at a particular address. Residence at that address is then made a condition of their temporary admission into the United Kingdom, to which other conditions may be added, principally a requirement that the asylum seeker reports regularly to the Immigration Service (IS) at a dedicated reporting centre or local police station. Verification of the place of residence occurs during reporting. In addition, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) make regular checks, including personal visits, to ensure that individuals still reside at the recorded address.

IND maintains a central database containing the information supplied, which is also included in the individual Home Office (HO) file. All applicants, and their representatives, are informed of the obligation to notify the HO of any subsequent change of address throughout the asylum process. This may be done either in writing or in person to the nearest IS reporting centre or local enforcement office.

Bobbybanks

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Department will respond to the proposal from Wirral police force for Bobbybanks. [208427]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: Merseyside police forwarded a paper entitled "Policing the Demographic Trough—The Policing Bank Concept", to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) on 2 February 2004. A reply was sent by HMIC on 11 March 2004.

Burglary (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many burglaries there were in each London borough in *(a)* each year since 2001 and *(b)* each month to date in 2004. [205075]

Ms Blears: The information requested has been supplied by the Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis and is contained in the table.

Recorded offences of burglary by London borough

Number of offences

Area	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Barking and Dagenham	2,200	2,045	2,127
Barnet	4,056	4,003	4,045
Bexley	2,382	2,360	2,306
Brent	4,134	4,131	3,960
Bromley	3,317	3,827	3,301
Camden	5,782	5,975	5,108
Croydon	3,871	4,463	3,535
Ealing	4,628	4,419	4,427
Enfield	4,136	4,538	3,898
Greenwich	2,801	2,995	2,913
Hackney	4,363	4,591	4,493
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,006	2,971	3,016
Haringey	4,655	4,469	4,277
Harrow	2,650	2,804	2,707
Havering	2,485	2,515	2,073
Heathrow Airport	71	71	59
Hillingdon	3,508	3,753	3,373
Hounslow	3,165	3,407	3,494
Islington	4,589	4,591	3,952
Kensington and Chelsea	3,117	2,558	2,475
Kingston upon Thames	1,237	1,078	924
Lambeth	7,121	6,061	5,125
Lewisham	3,315	3,778	3,828
Merton	2,016	1,962	2,005
Newham	3,911	3,587	3,496
Redbridge	2,866	2,904	3,023
Richmond upon Thames	2,268	2,135	1,800
Southwark	4,784	5,101	4,724
Sutton	1,714	1,560	1,450
Tower Hamlets	3,378	3,443	3,301
Waltham Forest	3,672	4,053	3,381
Wandsworth	4,216	4,638	3,872
Westminster	5,945	5,272	4,449

Number of offences

			2004		
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*
Barking and Dagenham	203	199	223	184	209
Barnet	286	322	342	284	308
Bexley	192	125	176	136	131
Brent	321	280	346	340	352
Bromley	312	330	341	308	245
Camden	388	337	344	344	331
Croydon	383	390	308	251	227
Ealing	388	412	396	335	341
Enfield	382	316	316	304	250
Greenwich	298	296	263	264	272
Hackney	350	360	340	300	281
Hammersmith and Fulham	220	193	223	211	172
Haringey	346	300	291	321	276
Harrow	217	204	206	169	174
Havering	182	220	212	218	174
Heathrow Airport	2	0	1	2	8
Hillingdon	290	236	239	243	255
Hounslow	277	241	272	230	168
Islington	321	357	353	319	293
Kensington and Chelsea	226	220	257	208	264
Kingston upon Thames	76	74	78	88	66
Lambeth	374	342	341	377	341
Lewisham	303	249	325	286	358
Merton	209	139	139	141	148
Newham	252	260	249	236	275
Redbridge	270	251	240	228	262
Richmond upon Thames	139	182	181	145	165
Southwark	457	327	264	325	351
Sutton	103	84	130	129	75
Tower Hamlets	222	194	207	225	249
Waltham Forest	296	236	240	249	274
Wandsworth	268	259	368	348	271
Westminster	387	291	343	344	338

Number of offences

			2004		
	June	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*
Barking and Dagenham	196	162	191	166	163
Barnet	334	326	275	294	368
Bexley	160	146	149	176	146
Brent	309	344	319	327	308
Bromley	222	209	252	267	322
Camden	325	344	373	405	365
Croydon	239	257	267	268	268
Ealing	300	315	302	340	364
Enfield	267	237	279	225	290

Number of offences

	2004				
	June	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*
Greenwich	272	236	209	226	286
Hackney	367	293	289	338	301
Hammersmith and Fulham	212	246	308	225	269
Haringey	268	322	346	320	346
Harrow	178	149	167	171	192
Havering	187	188	226	169	185
Heathrow Airport	3	3	2	2	6
Hillingdon	203	207	208	212	269
Hounslow	231	257	261	242	298
Islington	308	283	287	292	317
Kensington and Chelsea	217	246	218	229	240
Kingston upon Thames	65	85	95	76	92
Lambeth	337	358	373	381	296
Lewisham	251	302	321	304	331
Merton	119	152	136	154	162
Newham	264	228	257	271	304
Redbridge	252	237	228	230	284
Richmond upon Thames	159	184	183	154	160
Southwark	364	339	344	409	361
Sutton	90	103	119	130	131
Tower Hamlets	333	251	244	239	272
Waltham Forest	260	255	237	272	280
Wandsworth	244	323	380	335	254
Westminster	342	292	294	360	409

The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Child Custody

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children have died in custody in each year since 1990. [208117]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The table shows the number of juvenile deaths in custody since 1990.

Calendar year	*Number of juvenile deaths*
1990	3
1991	1
1992	1
1993	1
1994	2
1995	2
1996	1
1997	0
1998	3
1999	2
2000	3
2001	3
2002	2
2003	0
2004	2
Total	26

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children are in custody in the secure estate as a result of criminal behaviour, broken down by *(a)* age, *(b)* gender, *(c)* placement and *(d)* constituency of home address. [208119]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The information requested is recorded in the table. The figures were supplied by the Youth Justice Board and relate to 13 January 2004. Data are not available by constituency of home address, and have been provided by Government office region.

Gender (all)

	Description					
Count of DOB/Accommodation type	*East Midlands*	*Eastern*	*London*	*North East*	*North West*	*South East*
Age 11						
LASCH	—	—	—	—	1	—
Total	—	—	—	—	1	—
Age 12						
LASCH	—	2	1	1	—	2
STC	—	1	—	—	—	—
Total	—	3	1	1	—	2
Age 13						
LASCH	3	1	3	1	7	—
STC	2	—	5	—	—	3
Total	5	1	8	1	7	3

Gender (all)

Count of DOB/Accommodation type	*Description* *East Midlands*	*Eastern*	*London*	*North East*	*North West*	*South East*
Age 14						
LASCH	5	2	7	6	16	12
STC	7	5	10	1	3	9
Total	12	7	17	7	19	21
Age 15						
LASCH	8	1	6	4	14	2
STC	7	10	18	2	6	2
YOI	22	12	49	7	42	16
Total	37	23	73	13	62	20
Age 16						
LASCH	3	3	6	3	13	1
STC	7	4	16	2	10	10
YOI	47	33	127	22	132	58
Total	57	40	149	27	155	69
Age 17						
LASCH	—	—	—	—	1	2
STC	1	—	3	—	1	2
YOI	94	78	238	51	224	98
Total	95	78	241	51	226	102
Grand total	206	152	489	100	470	217

Count of DOB/ Accommodation type	*Description* *South West*	*Wales*	*West Midlands*	*Yorkshire*	*Grand total*
Age 11					
LASCH	—	—	—	1	2
Total	—	—	—	1	2
Age 12					
LASCH	—	—	—	1	7
STC	—	—	1	—	2
Total	—	—	1	1	9
Age 13					
LASCH	—	3	1	6	25
STC	—	—	2	—	12
Total	—	3	3	6	37
Age 14					
LASCH	7	4	9	15	83
STC	—	—	13	7	55
Total	7	4	22	22	138
Age 15					
LASCH	2	5	5	11	58
STC	1	1	13	4	64
YOI	10	9	22	45	234
Total	13	15	40	60	356
Age 16					
LASCH	4	3	1	10	47
STC	1	1	9	6	66
YOI	32	44	86	90	671
Total	37	48	96	106	784
Age 17					
LASCH	—	3	1	2	9
STC	1	1	1	—	10
YOI	50	77	151	169	1,230
Total	51	81	153	171	1,249
Grand total	108	151	315	367	2,575

Community Support Officers (London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* street wardens are employed within the Greater London area. [209921]

Ms Blears: As at the end of September 2004, when figures were last published, there were 1,809 community support officers (CSOs) in the Greater London area.

Neighbourhood and street wardens are dealt with by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, who informs me that there are 321 wardens in Greater London funded by his Department. There are other wardens in addition to this operating in Greater London and elsewhere but they are not funded centrally and there is no central record of their numbers.

Coroners

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inquests in the jurisdiction of the Cleveland Coroner were heard in *(a)* August, *(b)* September, *(c)* October, *(d)* November and *(e)* December 2004 by (i) the coroner, (ii) the deputy coroner and (iii) the assistant deputy coroner. [207492]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: There are two coroners within the area of the former county of Cleveland. The information requested is not held centrally.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the salaries of the *(a)* coroner, *(b)* deputy coroner and *(c)* assistant deputy coroner of Cleveland were at 1 December 2004. [207493]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2004]*: This is a matter for the relevant local authorities. There are two coroners within the area of the former county of Cleveland. The two authorities responsible are Middlesbrough borough council (for the Teesside coroner) and Hartlepool borough council (for the Hartlepool coroner). They lead for the other authorities in the former county.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many days in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 (i) the Coroner, (ii) the Deputy Coroner and *(iii)* the Assistant Deputy Coroner for Cleveland sat on inquests. [207539]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* This information is not available centrally. There are two coroners within the former county of Cleveland. Home Office statistics on case numbers in Teesside show that 274 inquests were held in 2002 and 273 in 2003; and that 82 inquests were held in 2002 and 59 in 2003. Data (in Hartlepool) for 2004 are not yet available.

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many days on average in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 (i) coroners, (ii) deputy coroners and (iii) assistant deputy coroners in the north-east region sat on inquests. [207616]

Paul Goggins: This information is not available. Data on days of sittings are not collected centrally.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan will receive a reply to his letter of 25 November 2004 to the Minister of State for Citizenship, Immigration and Nationality regarding the Sectors Based Scheme, Arrangements for Foreign Employees. [208017]

Mr. Browne: I regret that the original copy of the letter of 25 November appears to have gone astray, which is why there has been no reply until now.

There is nothing in the Sectors Based Scheme itself that requires a person to sign on with the police. However, where someone given leave under that scheme is a "relevant foreign national" for the purposes of part 10 of the Immigration Rules, he would normally be required to register with the police.

The arrangements relating to the administration of the police registration scheme at a local level are a matter for the individual police force concerned, and the matter raised in the letter is therefore one for Grampian police to consider.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer letters from the hon. Member for Hornchurch dated 29 January, 1 October and 12 November 2004, concerning the case of Brian Kent, reference M19306/4; and if he will make a statement on whether computer problems led to the delay. [209201]

Mr. Browne: I can confirm that the letters referred to by my hon. Friend were received by the Home Office. Although a reply to his letter of 29 January 2004 was drafted, it is not clear why this was not sent and why his two further letters were not acted upon more quickly. Mr. Kent has now commenced action to take his case to the European Court of Human Rights and we are considering our response. It is expected that the Home Office will be in a position to send a full reply to my hon. Friend's letter of 12 November within four weeks.

Crime

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many snatch thefts have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208638]

Ms Blears: The available information relates to offences of theft from the person. Tables 1 and 2 give the number of offences recorded by the police in the Essex police force area and the Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area. Recorded crime data are published on a financial year basis and data at CDRP level for theft from the person are only available from 2001–02.

Table 3 gives the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty in the Essex police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area. Court proceedings data are published on a calendar year basis. Data for 2004 will not be available until the autumn.

Because recorded crime deals with offences and court proceedings deals with defendants, the two data sets are not directly comparable.

Table 1: Offences of theft from the person recorded by the police, 1997–98 to 2001–02

		Number of offences
Essex police force area	1997–98[1]	631
	1998–99[2]	717
	1999–2000	693
	2000–01	879
	2001–02	1,449
Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area	1997–98	n/a
	1998–99	n/a
	1999–2000	n/a
	2000–01	n/a
	2001–02	275

n/a—not available.

[1] The number of crimes recorded using the coverage and rules in use until 31 March 1998.

[2] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Note:

The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences of theft from the person recorded by the police, 2002–03 and 2003–04

		Number of offences
Essex police force area	2002–03	1,810
	2003–04	1,783
Southend Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area	2002–03	354
	2003–04	299

Note:

The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Table 3 Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Theft from the person	
Area and year	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[2]
Essex police force area		
1997	140	158
1998	192	164
1999	139	127
2000	70	55
2001	165	112
2002	177	138
2003	204	173
South East Essex petty sessional area[3]		
1997	43	44
1998	66	41
1999	61	51
2000	20	18
2001	42	29
2002	45	30
2003	36	28

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] For South East Essex PSA the guilty figures include those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court.

[3] Covers Southend and includes some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of gun crime have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208641]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the table and relates to crimes recorded by the police in Essex in which firearms were reported to have been used. This information is not collected centrally for Southend.

With regard to prosecutions and convictions, this information is not available centrally as the individual circumstances of the offence are not collected.

Firearms offences recorded by the police in Essex

Number of offences

	Air-weapons	*Non air-weapons*	*Total*
1997	211	58	269
1998–99[1]	270	47	317
1999–2000	283	61	344
2000–01	279	77	356
2001–02	448	98	546
2002–03[2]	584	148	732

[1] There was a change in the counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998.

[2] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures may have been inflated by this.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of crimes reported within the Greater London area has been cleared up in each of the last three years. [208747]

Ms Blears: The clear up rate for all offences recorded in the Greater London region was 14 per cent. in 2001–02,15 per cent. in 2002–03 and 16 per cent. in 2003–04.

Criminals (Release of Identity)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the policy of his Department is on publishing the identities of criminals wanted by the police; [205354]

(2) what the policy of the police is on publishing the identities of criminals wanted *(a)* for questioning and *(b)* to appear in court. [205355]

Ms Blears: The issue of publishing the identities of persons suspected of involvement in an offence and wanted by the police either for questioning or for court appearance is an operational matter for the individual chief officer police.

Guidance is published by the Association of Chief Police Officers Media Advisory Group on using public media to locate or identify individuals. The guidance is available at http://www.acpo.police.uk/policies/index.html.

Departmental Expenditure (Asylum)

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on the delivery of the asylum process in the last year for which figures are available. [209485]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate's (IND) resources cover a wide range of activities including the asylum process and it is not possible to identify separately the costs of the asylum process. Total IND resource expenditure for 2002–03 was £1,863 million.

Deportation

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to accelerate the deportation of foreign nationals who remain in detention, having completed their sentence; and if he will make a statement. [209451]

Mr. Browne: Detention under Immigration Act powers is only used where there is no reasonable alternative once a deportee reaches the end of his or her prison sentence but cannot be immediately removed. The common barriers to removal are the unavailability of valid travel documentation, an outstanding application for leave to remain in the United Kingdom or an appeal against the decision to make a deportation order.

The Immigration and Nationality Department's (IND) criminal casework team recruited an additional 16 staff in November 2004 to ensure that the deportation cases are considered at an earlier stage into the sentence and to afford those being detained greater priority. It is additionally currently recruiting a further seven immigration officers to increase the number of surgery visits conducted across the Prison Service estate in order to complete applications for replacement passports at an earlier stage where they have been lost or destroyed.

IND has no influence over the determination of an appeal as this properly falls to the independent appellate authorities who in turn are responsible to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). However, IND does highlight to the independent appellate authorities that a person is detained in order for the appeal to be heard as quickly as possible.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners in the prison estate are held on remand awaiting deportation having completed their sentences; how many prisoners were held on this basis in 2004; and what the average period was for which such prisoners were held on remand. [208507]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of people who were detained in prison establishments awaiting deportation after completion of a criminal sentence is not available.

Work is on-going to improve the quality of data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in prison establishments.

Domestic Violence

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether funding for domestic violence advocacy services will be ring-fenced; [206043]

(2) whether domestic violence advocacy services will include assistance in respect of *(a)* justice systems, *(b)* health, *(c)* housing and *(d)* benefits; [206044]

(3) what plans he has to ensure that the development of domestic violence advocacy services will *(a)* identify and assess existing provision of local Women's Aid and other domestic violence advocacy services and *(b)* build on what already exists. [206045]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: We recognise that advocacy services are an important element in supporting victims of domestic violence, both in and outside the criminal justice system. It is important that there is a range of services for all victims of domestic violence locally, including advocacy provision, which is the responsibility of local partnerships.

Each partnership is required to produce a strategy every three years for reducing crime and disorder in their area, following an audit to establish need. These audits were undertaken earlier this year, and partnerships should now be identifying what the needs of their local communities are, including for services addressing domestic violence. They will then set out how these needs will be met in their three year strategies, bearing in mind their budgets, which come from a range of sources. There is no ring fenced funding for domestic violence advocacy services from the Home Office, though the Department allocated those local partnerships with responsibility for crime and disorder £74 million in 2004–05 through the Building Safer Communities Fund. Among a variety of interventions, this could be spent on domestic violence services.

How local services are then commissioned is a matter for local areas, though we would recommend that they consider working in partnership with voluntary and community organisations where appropriate.

The precise remit of individual advocacy services will be based on identified local need, and may include a range of emotional, legal and practical support.

To support partnerships in developing their three year strategies and considering the range of domestic violence services that might be appropriate in their area, we have recently launched 'Developing Domestic Violence Partnerships: A Guide for Partnerships', which includes a section on advocacy and where partnerships can go for further advice. The guidance can be found at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk/domesticviolence46.doc.

Drink Driving (Wales)

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for drink driving there have been in Wales in each year since 1996. [208842]

Paul Goggins: Information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on findings of guilt for offences of driving etc. after consuming alcohol or taking drugs 1996 to 2002 (latest available) is given in the table.

Data for 2003 will be available in March 2005.

Findings of guilt at all courts for offences of driving etc after consuming alcohol or taking drugs[1], Wales, 1996–2002

Findings of guilt	*Number of offences*
1996	6,053
1997	6,441
1998	6,407
1999	5,797
2000	6,158
2001	6,058
2002	6,032

[1] Including the following offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988: Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (impairment). [s. 4(1)]
Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle while having a breath, urine or blood alcohol concentration in excess of the prescribed limit. [s. 5(1)(a)]
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time, he/she was driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [s. 7(6)]
In charge of a motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (impairment). [s. 4(2)]
In charge of a motor vehicle while having a breath, urine or blood alcohol concentration in excess of the prescribed limit. [s. 5(1)(b)]
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time, he/she was driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [s. 7(6)]
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen of breath for a preliminary test. [s. 6(4)]
Excluding offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 s. 3A: Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

Drug-related Crime

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drug-related crimes in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* Tyne and Wear and *(c)* England and Wales were linked to heroin in the most recent period for which figures are available. [209289]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime figures, which are used to measure trends in crime, include statistics on drugs offences, such as possession, and on property crimes, such as burglary, do not record whether the latter are related to an offender's drug habits. They also do not separately identify drug offences relating to heroin. There are therefore no figures currently available for the total number of crime in different areas linked to heroin. Statistics on the number of convictions for drug offences do contain more information about the type of drugs involved but only provide national figures.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes in *(a)* South Tyneside, *(b)* Tyne and Wear and *(c)* England and Wales have been linked to drugs in each year since 1997. [209291]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime figures, which are used to measure trends in crime, include statistics on drugs offences, such as possession, and on property crimes, such as burglary, do not record whether the latter are related to an offender's drug habits. There are therefore no figures currently available for the total number of crimes in different areas linked to drugs.

Information on recorded drug offences, including trafficking and possession can be found in table 2.04 of the Home Office "Crime in England and Wales 2003–04" Statistics, which can be accessed via the RDS website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb1004 .pdf

These figures are not broken down by drug type.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people under the age of 18 years have been arrested for possessing class A drugs in each of the last seven years. [206229]

Caroline Flint: Figures on the number of people under the age of 18 years arrested for possessing Class A drugs are not collated. However we do have data on the number of people under the age of 17 years found guilty, cautioned or dealt with by compounding for unlawful possession of all drugs.

This information, which is only available since 2001, can found in Table 3.8 of the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics which can be accessed via the Research Development and Statistics website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804.pdf.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people under the age of 18 years have been arrested for selling Class A drugs in each of the last seven years. [206240]

Caroline Flint: Figures on the number of people under the age of 18 years arrested for selling Class A drugs are not collated. However we do have data on the number of people under the age of 17 years found guilty, cautioned or dealt with by compounding for unlawful supply of all drugs.

This information, which is only available since 2001, can found in Table 3.8 of the Home Office Drug Seizure and Offender Statistics which can be accessed via the RDS website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/hosb0804.pdf.

Evidence

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the recommendations on disclosure from *(a)* the study commissioned by his Department, *(b)* the thematic review by the Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate and *(c)* Lord Justice Auld's review of the Criminal Courts have been implemented. [207449]

Paul Goggins: The prosecution disclosure recommendations made by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Inspectorate and the Home Office commissioned research were taken forward by a joint police/CPS project which produced revised joint operational instructions issued in November 2002. This was followed up by training based on the new instructions which began in April 2003. The Government's response to Sir Robin Auld's recommendations, including those on disclosure, is set out in the Annex to the Criminal Justice White Paper: Justice for All (CM 5563) issued in July 2002.

Lord Justice Auld's recommendation that the two stage prosecution disclosure test should be replaced by a single test was included in part 5 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 as were provisions aimed at addressing the findings of the Home Office commissioned research that many defence statements are inadequate. A public consultation exercise relating to the implementation of Part 5 of the 2003 Act ended last month and the responses are being evaluated with a view to implementation in April this year.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the admission of similar fact evidence in trials. [207450]

Paul Goggins: The common law "similar fact" rule allowed the prosecution to rely on a defendant's previous misconduct in certain circumstances. However the Bad Character provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, which were implemented on 15 December 2004, abolished this and other common law rules governing the admissibility of such evidence in criminal proceedings. In their place the Act sets out a number of "gateways" through which evidence of a defendant's bad character may be admissible, where relevant and probative. One of these is where such evidence is

> "relevant to an important matter in issue between the defendant and the prosecution".

The Act makes clear that such

> "matters in issue between the defendant and the prosecution"

include the question whether the defendant has a propensity to commit offences of the kind with which he is charged.

Firearms

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been proceeded against for the conversion of firearms in England and Wales in each year since 1993. [203520]

Caroline Flint: Statistics on the number of people proceeded against for the conversion of firearms is shown in the table.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Number of persons proceeded against at the magistrates courts for conversion of firearm offences, England and Wales 1993–2003[1]

Offence description	*Principal statutes*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Shortening a shotgun or other smooth bore gun	Firearms Act 1968 s4(1) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 s157 Sch 8 Part III	29	22	27	26	14	12	15	6	7	9	5
Conversion of firearms	Firearms Act 1968 s4(3) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 s157 Sch 8 Part III	9	10	5	5	6	4	3	1	3	4	3

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[1] These data are on the principal offence basis. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many penalty notices for disorder for consumption of alcohol in designated public places have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208951]

(2) how many penalty notices for disorder for using public telecommunications systems for sending messages known to be false in order to cause annoyance have been issued by *(a)* Essex Police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208952]

(3) how many penalty notices for disorder for wasting police time or giving false reports have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208953]

(4) how many penalty notices for disorder for disorderly behaviour while drunk in a public place have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208954]

(5) how many penalty notices for disorder for buying or attempting to buy alcohol for consumption in a bar in licensed premises by a person under 18 have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208955]

(6) how many penalty notices for disorder for throwing stones etc at trains or trackside buildings on railways have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208956]

(7) how many penalty notices for disorder for trespassing on a railway have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208957]

(8) how many penalty notices for disorder for knowingly giving a false alarm to a fire brigade have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208958]

(9) how many penalty notices for disorder for alcohol related offences have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004; [208959]

(10) how many penalty notices for disorder for throwing fireworks in a thoroughfare have been issued by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police since the scheme was rolled out nationally in 2004. [208960]

Ms Blears: Data are collected centrally at police force level only. The following table gives the number of notices issued, by offence, by Essex police from January to the end of November 2004.

Penalty notices for disorder issued in Essex from January to November 2004, by offence (provisional figures)

Offence	*Number issued*
Breach of fireworks curfew	1
Causing harassment, alarm or distress	1,559
Consume alcohol in designated public place	8
Destroying damaging property (max £500)	16
Drunk and disorderly	644
Drunk in highway	23
Knowingly giving false alarm	1
Possession by under 18 of adult firework	2
Possession of Category 4 firework	1
Purchase of alcohol in bar in licensed premises for person under 18	1
Sending false messages	5
Theft (retail under £200)	45
Throwing fireworks	5
Throwing stones at a train	2
Trespassing on a railway	11
Wasting police time	33
Total	2,357

Foreign Students

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effects of increasing charges to foreign students for leave to remain in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [208334]

Mr. Browne: In September 2004 a joint project team—comprising representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the British Council—was asked to improve the evidence base around international students, and to undertake an assessment of the likely impact of increased leave to remain fees to attract more international students to the UK.

The outcomes of this work will be made available, alongside a Regulatory Impact Assessment for the education sector, when the Government announces its response to the recent Home Office Consultation on "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications".

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* others about (i) the contribution to the UK economy made by foreign students and (ii) the proposals to increase the charges for leave to remain in the UK. [208346]

Mr. Browne: We hold frequent and regular discussions with other Departments, including the Treasury and the DFES, at both ministerial and official level, which involve consideration of the economic contribution made to the UK by overseas students.

The Home Office consultation paper, "Review of Charges for Immigration applications" in September 2004, was agreed within Government, as will the decision on the final fee levels. The consultation has engaged a wide range of stakeholders and individuals, including UKCOSA and Universities UK, among others.

Fraud

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of Chip and PIN technology on levels of fraud. [202992]

Ms Blears: Chip and PIN is a finance and retail industry initiative that aims to reduce plastic card fraud by requiring card transactions to be authorised by the customer keying in a PIN rather than signing a receipt. At the same time the introduction of microchips into cards will help prevent the production of counterfeit cards (skimming). The public trial of Chip and PIN was a success and national roll out has now started, with a view to the majority of card transactions being Chip and PIN by 2005.

The Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) estimates that without Chip and PIN card fraud might have risen to £1 billion by the end of the decade. APACS forecasts that in 2007 total card fraud losses on UK issued cards currently looks set to fall to approximately £330 million.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on card fraud; and what steps the Government are taking to make the use of cards as a method of payment safer. [205551]

Caroline Flint: On 26 April 2002, the Government launched a two-year pilot of a unique policing unit (the Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit(DCPCU) based in London, which works closely with the banking industry to reduce organised card and cheque fraud, using intelligence largely provided by the card industry. The Home Office funded 25 per cent. of the unit's costs (£1.4 million over two years) during the pilot with the remainder being met by the card industry. An independent evaluation of the unit showed that it had been successful in detecting or preventing a significant amount of cheque and credit card fraud. Government are delighted that the unit is now continuing with full financial support provided by the card industry. The Home Office continues to chair the Steering Group.

We have been encouraging financial and retail sectors to work towards early implementation of more secure systems to combat fraud. This includes Chip and PIN, a finance and retail industry initiative that aims to reduce plastic card fraud by requiring card transactions to be authorised by the customer keying in a PIN rather than signing a receipt. At the same time the introduction of microchips into cards will help prevent the production of counterfeit cards (skimming). The public trial of Chip and PIN was a success and national roll out is under way.

The Home Office publishes fraud prevention advice on its website and has launched a website to combat internet fraud. The e-tailing mini site forms part of the crime reduction website and provides information to help both consumers and businesses protect themselves when buying and selling over the internet.

The Home Office has also published, jointly with APACS, a leaflet for members of the public about safe credit card use. Supplies of the leaflet have been sent to all police forces and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership's in England and Wales. It is also available on the Home Office website.

Identity Cards

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many centres there will be in *(a)* Orkney and Shetland, *(b)* the Highlands and Islands and *(c)* Scotland where biometric data can be collected when identity cards are introduced. [208057]

Mr. Browne: No decisions have been taken on the number and location of centres where biometric information may be recorded. Not all centres would necessarily need to be at fixed locations. The recent biometric enrolment pilot included a fixed location in Glasgow but also conducted trials using mobile equipment. In Scotland, the mobile demonstration unit visited Methol and Dunfermline.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the facial biometric planned for *(a)* passports and *(b)* identity cards will (i) constitute a scan of a photograph provided by the applicant and (ii) involve the use of special technology which will require the individual to attend a processing centre. [208269]

Mr. Browne: The facial biometric planned for the ePassport will be presented as a photographic image within the passport, as is currently the case, and will additionally be held as data within the new passport's biometric chip. Data will continue to be captured by scanning a photograph submitted by the applicant. The photograph must conform to the recently agreed and issued standards. Image capture and its reproduction in the two forms required by the new passports will not require an applicant's presence at a processing centre or elsewhere.

The biometric requirements for the identity card are not yet complete. However, it is expected that the applicant will be required to attend an enrolment centre in order to have images of other biometrics, such as fingerprints and irises recorded. Therefore it is likely that a facial image will be recorded at same time, allowing more control over the lighting and the size and quality of the image than might be the case if a photograph supplied by the applicant were used.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what contribution the Police Information Technology Organisation has made to the development of the identity cards scheme. [208280]

Mr. Browne: The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) has helped the identity cards programme team to identify the uses which the police might make of the identity cards scheme and the requirements which it will be necessary for the scheme to support in order to deliver benefits to the police. PITO's advice has helped to ensure that the possible uses the police might make of the scheme are feasible within the context of existing and planned police systems and that technological compatibility has been considered at all stages. Additionally, they have shared their experience of the procurement and implementation of automated fingerprint identification systems.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent consultants from PA Consulting are advising his Department on the design of the national identity card programme; what the average annual cost per consultant is; what the total cost of the consultants is; and if he will make a statement. [209052]

Mr. Browne: The number of PA consultants working on the identity cards programme varies from day-to-day according to the needs of the programme. In December the full time equivalent of 32.5 staff were employed at an average daily cost of £1,093 each. Total expenditure on PA Consulting Group from May to December 2004 was £5,632,553.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of public resistance on the take-up rates of identity cards. [209621]

Mr. Browne: In the early years of the scheme, the large majority of ID cards will be issued as people renew or apply for passports. As the case for upgrading the security of passports is well understood and supported by the general public, the Government do not anticipate any significant public resistance.

When the Government announced their policy to proceed with a scheme in November 2003, they stated that in considering any decision to move to compulsion they would want to be confident that roll out during the first phase had delivered significant coverage of the population and that there was clear public acceptance for the principle of a compulsory ID card which would be used to access free public services.

Immigration

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of migrants from EU accession states who have failed to register with the workplace monitoring scheme since entering the UK. [208886]

Mr. Browne: Under the Accession (Immigration and Worker Registration) Regulations 2004, workers requiring registration who do not make an application within one month of starting work will be employed illegally.

An employer who continues to employ a worker requiring registration, who has not applied to register within one month of starting work, may be committing a criminal offence and could be liable to a fine of £5,000.

The Government are supporting compliance of the Scheme. Information is available on the 'Working in the UK' website www.workingintheuk.gov.uk and by telephoning the Worker Registration Scheme on 0114 259 6262. Employers can also find information and advice on the Home Office website www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk and from the Employers' Helpline (0845 010 6677). Management information published on 10 November 2004 showed that between 1 May and 30 September just under 91,000 workers applied to register with the Worker Registration Scheme (my statement of that date refers).

There is no current estimate of Accession Country nationals working without registering.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals who have been granted full British citizenship since 1997 have had their status revoked following the imposition of a custodial sentence for crimes committed in the UK. [208944]

Mr. Browne: There have been no removals of citizenship since 1973. The power to deprive a person of his or her citizenship on grounds of ordinary criminality (as opposed to actions seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the United Kingdom) was rescinded by section 4 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been in the average time UK and other EU arriving passengers have to wait to pass through immigration over the past 12 months. [209231]

Mr. Browne: Following the strengthening of the EU control in 2004 some passengers may have noticed an increase in clearance times. However, there is no specific measurement of the time taken to clear UK and other EEA arriving passengers through UK immigration controls so I am unable to provide specific details of any increase.

The UK Immigration Service is committed to clearing all bona fide passengers with minimal delay, and arrival volumes are closely monitored to ensure that staff are deployed to maintain this.

Immigration and Nationality Department

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will instruct the Immigration and Nationality Department to return the passport of the constituent of the hon. Member for Basingstoke Mr. Ahmed Rizwe (ref. R350848). [208177]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to the hon. Member about Mr. Rizwe's case on 20 January.

Magistrate's Court (Dyfed Powys)

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many warrants were issued by Dyfed Powys Magistrates' Court for the arrest of people normally resident in the Greater London area in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003; and how many were served in each year. [207840]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prosecutions and *(b)* convictions occurred in each of the last three years of drivers who were incapacitated as a consequence of *(a)* alcohol, *(b)* illegal drugs and *(c)* legal pharmaceuticals; and if he will make a statement. [204960]

Ms Blears: Available information on the number of proceedings and convictions for offences of driving while impaired by drink or drugs or while above the specified limit for alcohol in England and Wales is given in the following table. The data cannot separately identify whether alcohol or drugs were involved.

Proceedings at magistrates courts and findings of guilt at all courts for offences of driving etc. after consuming alcohol or taking drugs[1]*, England and Wales, 2000 to 2002*

Total England and Wales	*Proceedings*	*Findings of guilt*
2000	96,160	85,829
2001	95,983	84,748
2002	102,032	90,488

[1] Including the following offences under Road Traffic Act 1988:
Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (impairment) [s. 4(1)].
Driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle while having a breath, urine or blood alcohol concentration in excess of the prescribed limit, [s. 5(1) (a)]
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time, he/she was driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle, [s. 7 (b)]
In charge of a motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (impairment), [s. 4 (2)]
In charge of a motor vehicle while having a breath, urine or blood alcohol concentration in excess of the prescribed limit, [s. 5 (1) (b)]
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time, he/she was driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle, [s.7 (b)]
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen of breath for a preliminary test. [s. 6(4)]
Excluding offences under Road Traffic Act 1988 sec 3A: Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for the public protection function of the probation service to be the subject of contestability under the National Offender Management Service structures. [201030]

Paul Goggins: Detailed plans for introducing contestability are being developed. There are currently no plans to apply contestability to the public protection function of the probation service.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether liaison arrangements with magistrates at a local level will continue to be based on the local criminal justice areas after the introduction of the National Offender Management Service. [204963]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) places great importance on liaison arrangements with magistrates at local criminal justice area level and at individual courts within criminal justice areas. We are consulting on proposals for improved consultative arrangements between NOMS and sentencers at both magistrates' courts and criminal justice area level.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the business risk to the Home Office of the introduction of the National Offender Management Service; and if he will make a statement. [208691]

Paul Goggins: A risk assessment has been carried out on the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Change Programme. It considered a range of potential risks to the programme and considered the consequences should any such risks occur. The resulting risk register details the actions required to ensure that the consequences of any risk are minimised. These actions are being taken forward by the Directors of NOMS.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether provisions in the proposed Bill on the management of offenders which strengthen the powers of probation boards will be consistent with the latest National Offender Management Service structure blueprint. [208694]

Paul Goggins: As I made clear in the statement I made on 20 July 2004, we are developing the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) within the framework of the existing probation board structure. The measures in the Bill will make small and sensible adjustments to existing legislation. These include setting out the aims of NOMS and establishing sentence planning and review as a core offender management function and a duty of local probation boards.

Although we have started to explore what longer term organisational change might be needed to deliver NOMS in its final state, detailed feasibility work and further consultation will be needed before decisions are made. Creating a 'central spine' of accountability from offender managers to the National Offender Manager is crucial to implementing the Carter reforms and we are now looking at organisational models which will deliver this. We are discussing with the Probation Boards

Association the changes to the role of Boards which it is likely will be involved, and will continue to be open in planning the "end state" for NOMS.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the model for contestability for the National Offender Management Service will allow *(a)* the Probation Service, *(b)* the Prison Service and *(c)* the voluntary sector to work in (i) competition and (ii) co-operation with each other; and how this model will influence the aim of breaking down the separation of the services. [209631]

Paul Goggins: Contestability within the National Offender Management Service includes both competition and co-operation between sectors. We are keen to encourage all sectors to compete for the delivery of the full range of services for offenders and to increase the number of private companies and voluntary and community bodies involved. The case for co-operation between sectors, for instance through a consortium rests on value for money. When the contestability model is in full operation, we expect to see probation services and prisons within a given region combining to procure services in a way that will improve value for money, drive up quality and achieve consistency of service for offenders in custody and the community.

Operation Stealth

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms seized by Nottinghamshire Constabulary during "Operation Stealth" were real firearms subject to Section 5 (1)(aba) of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended); how many were imitation firearms capable of being readily converted to fire live ammunition as set out in the provisions of Section 1 (1)*(a)* of the Firearms Act 1982; how many were gas cartridge firearms subject to Section 5 (1)(af) of the Firearms Act 1968 (as amended); how many were imitation firearms; and how many were air weapons. [206931]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested. However, I understand from the Nottinghamshire police that since August 2002 a total of 317 guns have been seized during "Operation Stealth", as follows:

	Number
Section 1 handguns	70
Converted handgun	43
Shotgun	23
Rifles/machine guns	17
BB gun	27
Blank firing	40
Air weapon	41
Gas-powered	12
Stun gun	19
Imitation	25

Passports

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance with passport applications will be given to people living in remote and peripheral areas when the right to apply by post is removed. [208056]

Mr. Browne: I announced on 21 December 2004 that from late 2006 adults applying for their first passport would need to attend an interview as part of the process of confirming their identity. The initial application may still be made by post and other existing channels, and the right to apply by post will remain for all other passport application types.

The United Kingdom Passport Service is working on detailed proposals for implementing this requirement, including establishing a network of new offices where the interview will be held. While these proposals are not yet finalised, the aim, using a 70–80 office model, would be that nearly 97 per cent. of applicants would have an interview office within 20 miles of their home, 2.4 per cent. would be in a 20–40 mile radius with only 0.7 per cent. having to travel further than 40 miles. Wherever possible, applicants will be given the flexibility to choose when and where they are interviewed within the network, and we will, as far as practicable, manage office opening hours to suit applicant demand. For those in more remote areas of the UK, we are considering the practicality of mobile facilities or peripatetic staff. We have no plans at present to provide financial assistance.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons the documentation requirements for passport applications have been changed to long birth certificates. [209133]

Mr. Browne: All first time applications for those born on or after 1 January 1983 must be supported by a full birth certificate showing details of parentage.

The previous practice of accepting a short birth certificate as proof of nationality for people born in the United Kingdom on or after 1 January 1983 was vulnerable to false claims of nationality. This was primarily because the short forms of birth certificate do not show details of parentage.

A person born in the UK could enter fictitious details about his/her parents on the passport application form, or a person here unlawfully could attempt to obtain a British passport for a child born here by making a false statement about his/her self. Under the previous requirements these types of false representation were very unlikely to be detected, but could be prevented by the requirement for a full birth certificate to be submitted with the passport application.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the completion of questions relating to bank account details on application forms returned in relation to the UK Passport Service's Personal Identification Project affects the application for a passport. [209445]

Mr. Browne: Bank account details have been collected as part of the pilot scheme identification matrix used to support the processing of passport applications within the Personal Identification Project. Following analysis of the pilot scheme outcomes and feedback, the decision has been made not to request this customer information when the system is deployed nationally in Q3 2005.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the credit reference company Equifax retains the information it receives from passport applicants for use on its databases. [209446]

Mr. Browne: Equifax are currently contracted to the UK Passport Service (UKPS) to provide database services to support the UKPS Personal Identification Project (PIP). During the life of this contract, Equifax retains the data on behalf of the UKPS, but it is contractually excluded from any use, including commercial use, of this information beyond the scope of the UKPS Personal Identity Project.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the credit reference company Equifax is allowed to use for commercial gain the information it receives from passport application forms. [209455]

Mr. Browne: Equifax are currently contracted to the UK Passport Agency (UKPA) to provide database services to support the UKPA Personal Identification Project (PIP). Equifax are contractually excluded from using data, for any reason outside the scope of PIP, gathered from passport application forms.

This data, whilst of a personal nature, does not differ from that included in a normal credit application, but does include checks against data from other Government Departments.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the locations in Scotland where the UK Passport Service plans to set up passport offices to meet the new requirements on passport issue announced on 21 December 2004. [209148]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* I announced on 21 December 2004 that from late 2006 adults applying for their first passport would need to attend an interview as part of the process of confirming their identity. Applications will continue to be sent in by post and other existing channels and will be processed initially in the present regional passport offices. First time adult applicants will then be invited to make an appointment for an interview. The UK Passport Service (UKPS) is seeking additional premises where interviews may be held. These will generally be small offices dedicated only to carrying out interviews and will not be passport offices offering the full range of UKPS services.

While UKPS proposals are not finalised, the aim, using 70 to 80 offices, is that nearly 97 per cent. of applicants would have an interview office within 20 miles of their home, 2.4 per cent. would be in a 20–40 mile radius with only 0.7 per cent. having to travel further than 40 miles. In order to take account of public transport links, the UKPS will be consulting transport planning authorities, including the relevant officials in the Scottish Executive, on possible locations for offices. Initial planning on the 70 to 80 office model has indicated a need, subject to consultation, for 11 new offices in Scotland: three in the borders, two in the central area (in addition to the regional passport office in Glasgow) and six distributed on the east and west coasts. For those in more remote areas, we are considering the practicality of mobile facilities or peripatetic staff.

Police

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stop and account procedures were undertaken by the police on average in a day in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* police force area and *(b)* crime reduction partnership. [203511]

Ms Blears: There is no data currently held centrally on stop and account procedures. The requirement to record all stops in line with recommendation 61 of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry will become effective on 1 April 2005.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of members of the police force in Stoke-on-Trent are *(a)* community support officers, *(b)* reserve officers and *(c)* part-time officers. [209896]

Ms Blears: Community support officers (CSOs) are not police officers, but police staff for whom the chief officer of the force may designate certain limited powers. The police service in England and Wales does not have a category of reserve police officers. Information on police numbers is not available in a way that makes it possible to identify the number of part-time police officers in the Stoke-on-Trent basic command unit (BCU).

The number of police officers (full-time equivalent) in the Stoke-on-Trent BCU on 31 March 2004 was 587. On 31 March 2004 there were 109 special constables in the Stoke-on-Trent BCU and at the end of September 2004 there were six CSOs in the Stoke-on-Trent BCU. I understand that the chief constable is using some of the funding made available by the Home Office in 2004–05 to increase the number of CSOs in Stoke to 18.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers have been recruited in each of the last 24 months, broken down by (i) police force and (ii) police authority. [205360]

Ms Blears: Information on police officer and community support officer (CSO) joiners is published annually. For 2002–03 it can be found at Table 5 (police officers) and Table 8 (CSOs) in Home Office Statistical Bulletin No.11/03 "Police Service Strength, England and Wales, 31 March 2003", published on 1 October 2003. For 2003–04 the same information can be found at Table 5 (police officers) and Table 8 (CSOs) of Home Office Statistical Bulletin No.13/04 "Police Service Strength, England and Wales, 31 March 2004", published on 27 September 2004. Copies are in the Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police recruits have completed basic police training in each year since 1997. [200288]

Ms Blears: The number of police recruits who have completed Stage 2 of Foundation Training in Centrex regional training centres in each financial year since 1997–98 are given in the table.

The number of police recruits who have completed Foundation Training in the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) are also given in the table. (The MPS were unable to provide accurate figures for 1997–98.)

	Centrex	*MPS*
1997–98	4,885	—
1998–1999	3,750	1,113
1999–2000	3,090	1,192
2000–01	5,861	862
2001–02	7,578	1,690
2002–03	7,977	2,374
2003–04	8,701	2,953

Policing (Lewisham)

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* estate wardens have been deployed in the Lewisham, Deptford constituency, broken down by year of appointment. [201097]

Ms Blears: The Lewisham, Deptford parliamentary constituency is part of the Lewisham borough operational command unit (OCU). The information available is for the OCU, in which 36 community support officers have been deployed. The Commissioner informs ~~me~~ that compiling a breakdown by year of appointment would incur disproportionate cost. community support officers were first deployed in Lewisham on 31 March 2003.

The ministerial responsibility for wardens lies with my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, but I understand that 30 wardens have been deployed in the borough of Lewisham.

Prison Suicides

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many of the prisoners who committed suicide in 2004 were housed in safe cells;. [208205]

(2) how many safe cells were installed in 2004; and how many he plans to install in 2005. [208206]

Paul Goggins: During 2004 there was one apparently self-inflicted death of a prisoner in a safer cell.

To confirm the number of safer cells installed during 2004 would require disproportionate cost. However, there are to date approximately 3,400 safer cells (including 389 at Bronzefield prison, which opened in June 2004) and there will be an additional 1,900 by April 2006.

No cell can be considered totally "safe", but a safer cell can complement a regime providing care of at risk prisoners and reduce risks around impulsive suicide attempts. The design of these cells includes features such as specially designed furniture and fixtures which are manufactured and installed to make the attachment of ligatures very difficult, and the prevention of access to window bars via non-opening windows with integral ventilation grills. The use of this type of accommodation should be seen as just one part of the multi-faceted suicide prevention strategy, as outlined in my answer to the hon. Member's accompanying Question [208208].

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners who committed suicide in 2004 were *(a)* men and *(b)* women; how many of each sex were aged under 21; and how many of each sex were on remand without conviction; [208207]

(2) how many prisoners committed suicide in 1998. [208209]

Paul Goggins: The information requested about prisoner self-inflicted deaths in 2004 is shown in the following table.

Self-inflicted deaths 2004

Sex	*Total*	*Under 21*	*Remand*
Male	82	5	30
Female	13	0	2
Total	95	5	32

Reducing the number of prisoner self-inflicted deaths remains a priority for myself and the Prison Service.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the number of suicides in prison; and whether his policy includes a target for the number of suicides each year which should not be exceeded. [208208]

Paul Goggins: On 31 March 2004, I announced the outline suicide prevention strategy that would be developed over the coming year. It can be summarised as, "Reducing distress and promoting the well-being of all who live and work in prisons". This follows extensive consultations including those with the Howard League, Prison Reform Trust, Inquest, the Youth Justice Board, Prisons and Probations Ombudsman, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, Samaritans and the Department of Health.

This strategy builds on the three-year safer custody strategy that ran from April 2001 and has a close relationship with issues of resettlement, detoxification, health, purposeful activity, as well as staff attitudes, leadership and training. Key achievements were the setting up of suicide prevention co-ordinators or equivalents in all prisons across the estate, an investment of over £21 million at six 'safer local' pilot sites and the development of a safer prison design, including "safer cells".

Clearly, all self-inflicted deaths in prison are deeply regrettable. To accompany the three-year safer custody strategy, a target was set for reducing the rate of self-inflicted deaths per 100,000 prisoners from the 1999–2000 figure of 141 to 112.8 by 2004–05. A rate of about 130 deaths per 100,000 is projected for 2004–05. The prisoner targets are being reconsidered in the light of experience.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners committed suicide in 2004 broken down by prison; and how many of those were *(a)* remand prisoners, *(b)* convicted but not sentenced, *(c)* aged under 16, *(d)* aged 16 or 17 and *(e)* aged between 18 and 21. [208516]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Prisons not shown on the list (88 of the 136 establishments) did not have any self-inflicted deaths during 2004.

		Number of prisoners who apparently took their own lives who were:					
Establishment	*Total number of apparent self-inflicted deaths*	*Convicted unsentenced*	*Remand*	*Sentenced*	*Aged under 16*	*Aged 16 and 17*	*Aged 18,19 and 20*
Acklington	2	—	—	2	—	—	—
Bedford	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Belmarsh	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Birmingham	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Blakenhurst	3	—	2	1	—	—	—
Bristol	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Brixton	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Brockhill	2	—	1	1	—	—	1
Buckley Hall	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Bullingdon	2	1	1	—	—	—	—
Canterbury	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Dartmoor	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Durham	3	—	1	2	—	—	—
Edmunds Hill	2	—	1	1			
Elmley	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Exeter	2	—	2	—	—	—	—
Frankland	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Gloucester	3	2	1	—	—	—	—
High Down	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Holloway	2	2	—	—	—	—	—
Holme House	1	—	1	—	—	—	1
Hull	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Kingston	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Lancaster Farms	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Leeds	2	—	1	1	—	—	—
Leicester	3	—	3	—	—	—	—
Lewes	2	—	2	—	—	—	—
Lincoln	2	—	—	2	—	—	—
Liverpool	3	—	3	—	—	—	—
Long Lartin	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Low Newton	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Manchester	6	1	1	4	—	—	—
New Hall	3	1		2	—	—	—
Norwich	3	1	1	1	—	—	1
Nottingham	3	1	2	—	—	—	—
Pentonville	3	1	1	1	—	—	—
Portland	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Preston	2	1	—	1	—	—	—
Ranby	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Reading	1	—	1	—	—	—	1
Rochester	1	—	—	1	—	—	1
Send	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Shrewsbury	5	—	3	2	—	—	—
Stafford	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Swansea	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Verne, The	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Wakefield	3	—	—	3	—	—	—
Wandsworth	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
Woodhill	3	1	1	1	—	—	—
Wormwood Scrubs	3	1	—	2	—	—	—
Wymott	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Total	95	18	32	45	0	0	5

On 31 March 2004, I announced the outline suicide prevention strategy that would be developed over the coming year. It can be summarised as, "Reducing distress and promoting the well-being of all who live and work in prisons". It has a close relationship with issues of resettlement, detoxification, health, purposeful activity and staff training.

The strategy recognises that prisoners are at particular risk of harming themselves in their early period in custody, when they are coping with issues of fear of imprisonment, detoxification or the impact of arrest on their family. Equally such risk is heightened when a prisoner's custodial status changes, for example when convicted or sentenced.

Remand prisoners form a large proportion of the prisoners in early custody and are therefore subject to a number of assessments and policies designed to enhance their safety. Any new prisoner or one whose status has changed has an interview with a reception healthcare screener, who looks for signs that a prisoner may self-harm. Induction sessions for new prisoners emphasise the support that is available, from staff, health care and other specialists, and from prisoner peer supporters such as insiders or Samaritans-trained listeners. The importance of maintaining contact with family and employers, and providing support to prisoners in respect of maintaining their housing, is further emphasised through the Custody to Work programme.

The Prison Service and the Youth Justice Board (YJB) are working closely together to prevent the suicides of young people held in their care. The YJB funds a dedicated juvenile outreach team to specifically assist juvenile establishments further develop and maintain their local suicide and self-harm prevention strategies. As part of the national Prison Service suicide prevention strategy, a separate (but linked) strategy is being developed for juveniles.

Prisons

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of self-harm have taken place in prisons in London in each of the last three years. [208740]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is provided in the following table:

	Number of self-harm incidents recorded per year			
Establishment	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[1]	*2004*[2]
Belmarsh	110	74	75	73
Brixton	74	128	119	55
Bronzefield[3]	n/a	n/a	n/a	102
Holloway	604	908	959	725
Pentonville	159	153	186	74
Wandsworth	94	81	54	161
Wormwood Scrubs	112	112	190	98
Feltham	53	48	104	81
Total	1,206	1.504	1,687	1.369

[1] In December 2002 new procedures for reporting self-injury were introduced in prisons in England and Wales. The evidence suggests that much of the increase in reported self-harm from 2003 may result from this rather than reflect an actual increase in incidence of self-harm

[2] 1 January—30 September only

[3] Bronzefield opened in June 2004

A number of intervention strategies have been introduced into establishments for people who self-harm. These include counselling, support groups, and specialised psychological interventions. A network of establishments has been set up to develop interventions, facilitate evaluation and share good practice. Guidance to staff on managing people who self-harm has been circulated to establishments.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many escapes from prisons in England and Wales there have been in each of the last three years. [209404]

Paul Goggins: The following table details prison escapes in the last three years, and so far this current financial year. Prison Service key performance indicators identify an escape as one where (i) the prisoner is not recaptured within 15 minutes or (ii) is recaptured within 15 minutes but has committed an offence other than escape before recapture.

Number of escapes

	Number of escapes from prisons
2001–02	15
2002–03	5
2003–04	10
2004–05[1]	10

[1] Figure as on 17 January 2005

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign national prisoners have been detained beyond their sentence expiry date in each prison in each of the last 10 years in England and Wales. [209595]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of people who have been detained beyond their sentence expiry date is not available.

Work is ongoing to improve the quality of the data held on those people detained under Immigration Act powers in prison establishments.

Psilocin

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what research his Department has conducted into psilocin use; [208270]

(2) if he will make a statement on the link between psilocin use and crime. [208271]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office has not conducted research into psilocin use.

Hallucinogenic mushrooms are known to be harmful to those with a mental illness or with an underlying mental health problem and can precipitate psychosis. Users are also vulnerable to self harm while under the influence of these mushrooms and those using them may experience negative flashbacks.

There is no clear evidence of a link between psilocin use and acquisitive or other crime.

Security Industry

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* warned, *(b)* prosecuted and *(c)* convicted for failure to comply with the Security Industry Authority requirements for the licensing of door staff; and what plans he has to introduce further penalties for individuals and organisations for failure to comply with those requirements. [203711]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: Prosecution of organisations or individuals who have failed to comply with the door supervisor requirements of the Private Security Industry Act 2001 is the responsibility of individual police forces and this information is not held centrally. There are no plans to introduce further penalties for individuals or organisations at this moment.

Sentencing

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when sentencing statistics for 2003 will be published. [208273]

Paul Goggins: Current plans are to publish a Home Office Statistical Bulletin on Sentencing Statistics for 2003 next month. This will include sentencing trends from 1993.

However, detailed statistics on sentencing for 2003 were included only in the four Supplementary Volumes of Criminal Statistics published on the Home Office website on 11 November 2004. Provisional sentencing data were also released (covering the first quarter of 2004 for the Crown Court and the last quarter of 2003 for magistrates courts) on the website on 15 November in a Quarterly Brief "Sentencing Statistics, England and Wales".

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average per annum cost of detaining a prisoner in England and Wales was in the latest year for which figures are available. [207067]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2004]:* The latest figure available is for the financial year 2003–04. For that year, the average cost of detaining a prisoner in England and Wales was £25,687. This figure incorporates both public and private sector prisons.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had over the last two years regarding anonymity for defendants in historical sex abuse cases; and what the outcome of those discussions was. [207322]

Paul Goggins: The Home Secretary and other Ministers considered and discussed anonymity for defendants in sex offence cases in the context of amendments tabled during the passage of the Sexual Offences Bill.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many witnesses in historic child abuse cases have been prosecuted for perverting the course of justice, on the basis of deliberate fabrication, since 1995. [207458]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify witnesses in historic child abuse cases who have been prosecuted for perverting the course of justice, as the circumstances of an offence are not collected centrally.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if the Government will extend the statutory reporting restrictions which preserve the anonymity of victims of historical sex abuse to persons accused of those offences. [207511]

Paul Goggins: The Government have carefully considered whether defendants in sex offence cases should be entitled to anonymity through reporting restrictions but does not believe that there is a case for a change in the law. The Government consider that strengthened guidance issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers and the Press Complaints Commission is the right approach.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners are imprisoned for committing a sex offence. [207334]

Paul Goggins: On 30 November 2004 there were 657 persons held on remand and 5,975 under immediate custodial sentence for sexual offences in prison establishments in England and Wales, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system. These figures constitute 5 per cent. of the total remand population and 10 per cent. of the total population under immediate custodial sentence.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to introduce an alternative to the Sex Offenders Treatment Programme which requires no admission of guilt on the part of the prisoner. [207514]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans to introduce an alternative sex offender treatment programme for offenders who do not admit their offences. An alternative programme intended to encourage offenders out of denial was trialled but was not successful as it did not reduce the number of those in denial or address their particular needs. It may also have an adverse impact on the effectiveness of existing programmes.

Mrs. Claire Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on how risk assessment of convicted sex offenders is carried out. [207515]

Paul Goggins: Risk assessment of those who are convicted of sexual offences is carried out before sentence and regularly throughout their period of supervision, both in custody and in the community.

The following risk assessment tools have been devised in order to facilitate these assessments:

The Risk Matrix 2000 predicts reconviction rates for both two and 20-year periods, based on actuarial factors empirically associated with risk of sexual offending.

The Offender Assessment System (OASys) is a risk assessment document, used jointly by the Probation Service and the Prison Service, which incorporates static and dynamic risk factors in order to inform accurate and current assessment.

Assessments measuring dynamic risk known to be associated with sexual reconviction, for example, sexual interests, self-management, distorted attitudes, are also routinely used.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what support his Department plans to make available to sex offenders to find *(a)* accommodation and *(b)* employment after their release from prison. [208822]

Paul Goggins: The issue of appropriate accommodation is addressed prior to an offender's release as part of his licence conditions; this could include consideration for approved premises. For offenders who potentially pose a risk of harm to the public, this is managed under the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), which include local housing authorities and registered social landlords as part of the duty to co-operate.

Jobcentres are also subject to the duty to co-operate provisions under MAPPA and securing employment is a factor contained within an offender's individual Supervision Plan. Finding employment is managed by local arrangement and suitability of any such employment is evaluated. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 provides for disqualification orders, which make it a criminal offence for convicted sex offenders to seek employment that would provide unsupervised access to children.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the impact of overcrowding on the number of prisoners completing the Sex Offender Treatment Programme. [209528]

Paul Goggins: The main risk created by overcrowding is that prisoners do not complete offending behaviour programmes to which they have been assigned because they are transferred to another establishment before the programme is completed. It is well understood in the Prison Service that prisoners who have started an offending behaviour programme should not be moved before the programme is completed.

The Prison Service monitors the delivery of all offending behaviour programmes for the proportion of prisoners who do not complete. The number of prisoners who start but do not complete the Sex Offender Treatment Programme is small and reasons include illness, breach of group rules and the offender voluntarily withdrawing. We believe that the number who do not complete because of overcrowding is negligible.

Tsunami

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on enabling children who have been orphaned as a result of the tsunami disaster from Sri Lanka and India to be allowed to join close relatives who now live in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [208726]

Mr. Browne: The immigration rules already contain provision allowing relatives who are settled in the United Kingdom to sponsor the entry of a child where there are serious and compelling considerations and suitable arrangements have been made for the child's care. In the case of children affected by the tsunami, such care will have to take account of the special needs of these children.

Recently, some countries affected by the tsunami have imposed restrictions upon the travel and adoption of children from the disaster areas, in part as a result of recent accounts of traffickers seeking to exploit vulnerable children there. Our decisions must take account of these restrictions and in view of the dangers presented by traffickers, our investigation of the full circumstances of individual cases will be as thorough as ever. However, my hon. Friend may be assured that a sympathetic approach will be taken in such cases.

UN Convention on Migrant Workers

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the changes to UK law which would be required for ratification of the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families. [207707]

Mr. Browne: Ratifying the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families would require a number of changes to UK legislation. The Convention would give migrants the same access to public funds and services as British citizens, regardless of their length of stay in the UK. Changes would be required to enable these migrant workers to access benefits, housing, education and social services.

Overseas nationals who are granted settlement in the UK are entitled to claim income-related benefits and non-contributory benefits and to access social housing in the same way as a British citizen. Individuals coming to the UK for employment have to support themselves and any dependants without recourse to public funds. However, state school education and treatment under the NHS do not qualify as public funds under the Immigration Rules. So migrant workers without settlement do have access to state education services and, as long as they remain in employment, NHS services. We believe that to extend this access to all benefits before these workers are settled in the UK would act as an unnecessary "pull factor" and undermine immigration controls.

We have no plans to ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. The rights of migrant workers are already protected in UK law, including under the Human Rights Act 1998 and we believe we have struck the right balance between the need for immigration control and the protection of the interests and rights of migrant workers.

Violent Incidents (Prisons)

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent incidents were reported in each institution within the secure estate in the most recent year for which records are available. [208118]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* There are a range of incidents that might be classified as violent. HM Prison Service defines violence as

> "any incident in which a person is, abused, threatened, or assaulted. This includes an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being or health. The resulting harm may be physical, emotional or psychological".

The tables which include centrally collected data about the most serious incidents in prisons, remand centres, juvenile and young offender institutions and secure training units, during the financial year 2003–04, have been placed in the Library. No central records are kept of violent incidents in immigration removal centres or local authority secure children's homes.

Wrongful Conviction (Compensation)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the criteria are for the award of *(a)* compensation and *(b)* ex gratia payments in cases of wrongful conviction and imprisonment; and if he will make a statement. [208514]

Paul Goggins: The criteria for the statutory scheme for compensation for wrongful conviction are set out within the provisions of section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988. The criteria for the ex gratia scheme are set out in the then Home Secretary's statement to the House of Commons on 29 November 1985, *Official Report*, columns 691–92.

Xenotransplantation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 650W, on xenotransplantation, what steps he took to ascertain that all of the animals were cynomolgous macaques; and what time period the information relates to. [207045]

Caroline Flint: The information was drawn from material prepared by the Home Office Chief Inspector during his review of compliance with the licence authorities granted to Imutran Ltd. staff for their xenotransplantation research. It relates to studies carried out in each of the years 1995 to 1999.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* number of actions, *(b)* number of settlements, *(c)* number of court cases and *(d)* the costs of each settlement. [206464]

Mr. Miliband: Information is not held centrally in the form requested.

The information available on the costs of litigation (including inquiries) is shown in the table.

	Cases[1]	*Hours*	*Cost (£)*
1997–98	18	237	27,909
1998–99	36	208	42,362
1999–2000	117	1,228	148,935
2000–01	145	479	39,331
2001–02	132	1,110	139,997
2002–03	135	1,728	175,157
2003–04	111	2,305	644,399

[1] Number of cases handled by Treasury Solicitor in year including cases carried forward from previous year.

Source:

Treasury Solicitor

Disbursements are the costs caused by representation by barristers and outside solicitors. Disbursements were increased in 2003–04 due to the Hutton Inquiry.

The number of cases and costs increased in 1999–2000 due to the BSE Inquiry and legal challenge to the House of Lords Bill.

Departmental Website

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office when the searchable database of all Government *(a)* non-departmental public bodies and *(b)* independent regulators will be available on his Department's website. [210294]

Mr. Miliband: 'Public Bodies 2004' will be published for the first time as a searchable database. We anticipate that the new searchable database containing information about non-departmental public bodies will be launched in the first quarter of this year, and I will announce its availability to the House.

The issue of identifying which public bodies sponsored by central Government Departments should be classified as independent regulators has been included in the review of the variety and complexity of public bodies being carried out at present in response to a recommendation of the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC). The Government indicated this in their response to the Better Regulation Task Force report "Independent Regulators" which my predecessor announced in a written ministerial statement on 9 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 61WS. This indicated that such bodies would not be identified separately when the database is first launched with 2004 data. That remains the case. The report of the review for PASC is due to be published soon and will comment further on this point.

Ministerial Residences

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the *(a)* capital and *(b)* notional open market rental value is of each official residence available to Ministers. [210419]

Mr. Miliband: Admiralty House contains residential accommodation for three Ministers. No Cabinet Office Ministers are currently accommodated in official residencies.

The capital value of the three flats, if extracted from the overall capital value of Admiralty House, is £7 million. The term "Open Market Rental Value" is no longer recognised by the Appraisal and Valuation Standards but is now defined as "Market Rent". The notional market rent for all the three flats is £21,900-£25,500 per calendar month (each flat is estimated to be in the region of £7,300-£8,500 per calendar month).

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208972]

Mr. Miliband: For Cabinet Office staff based in central London, there are 52 designated parking spaces. These are mainly for staff who work unsocial hours; staff/visitors who are disabled, ministerial and operational vehicles.

The Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS) College (formerly known as the Civil Service College) has 322 designated parking spaces at its residential training centre in Sunningdale. These are mainly for use by CMPS College staff and those of its Public Private Partnership/Public Finance Initiative partner, delegates attending CMPS College courses, visitors and any of those who are disabled. The CMPS College has an additional seven designated parking spaces at its non-residential training centre in London.

These are mainly for use by CMPS College staff, delegates attending CMPS College courses, visitors and any of those who are disabled.

The Emergency Planning College (EPC) has 105 designated parking spaces at its residential training centre in Easingwold. These are mainly for use by EPC staff and contractors, delegates attending courses, visitors and any of those who are disabled.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Antisocial Response Courts

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training is made available to magistrates on dealing with antisocial behaviour. [210726]

Mr. Leslie: Statutory responsibility for the training of magistrates currently rests with the 42 independent Magistrates' Courts' Committees (MCCs). The Judicial Studies Board (JSB) has provided training materials to MCCs on antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs), with are available on the JSB website.

In February 2004, the JSB advised MCCs that it expected every magistrate to receive a minimum of two hours face to face training on ASBOs by the end of this financial year.

The Home Office issued detailed guidance on ASBOs to Magistrates' Courts in November 2002. Preliminary Home Office guidance on the new Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 was issued to all magistrates courts in January 2004.

Asylum Process

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Home Affairs on delivering an efficient asylum process; and when each meeting to discuss such matters took place. [209487]

Mr. Leslie: The Lord Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Home Affairs both attend the regular Asylum Stocktake chaired by the Prime Minister.

Claims Direct

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 29W, on Claims Direct, if he will publish the minutes of the meeting between representatives of Claims Direct and officials of his Department in 2002 to discuss matters relating to the operation of the personal injury market. [210301]

Mr. Leslie: It would be inappropriate for me to disclose the minutes of the meeting that took place on 13 May 2002 between officials and Claims Direct without consulting with third parties. I shall write to the hon. Member for Blaby with a decision once those parties have been consulted.

Community Legal Service

Ross Cranston: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 770W, on the Community Legal Service, what the percentage was in each of the last 10 years. [210741]

Mr. Leslie: In the time available it was not possible to obtain an estimate for the whole of the UK legal services market for year 1994–95. However, for each of the nine remaining years, the estimated proportion of Community Legal Services[1] expenditure as a percentage of the UK legal services market was as follows:

[1] The Community Legal Service was created in April 2000. The percentage prior to this in the table covers legal aid for civil matters formally administered by the Legal Aid Board.

	Percentage
1995–96	8.3
1996–97	7.6
1997–98	7.0
1998–99	7.0
1999–2000	5.5
2000–01	5.2
2001–02	4.3
2002–03	4.5
2003–04	4.7

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 9 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Catherine Lim. [209854]

Mr. Leslie: The Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor wrote to my right hon. Friend on 7 December 2004 in response to his letter of 9 November. Unfortunately, due to an administrative error, the letter was not sent. Officials contacted my right hon. Friend's office on 18 January and a copy of the letter of 7 December has now been sent.

Crack Houses

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many crack house closures there have been since the introduction of the orders allowing such closures, broken down by region; and if he will make a statement on *(a)* the ease with which such orders can be served in the courts and *(b)* the most common cause of delays in seeking such orders in the courts. [206845]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Closure orders by Government Office region for the period 20 January to end September 2004 are as follows.

	Number
East of England	5
South East	23
South West	24
East Midlands	10

	Number
West Midlands	3
North West	13
North East	7
Yorkshire and the Humber	4
Wales	5
London	64
Total	158

There is no official data relating to the most common cause of delays in seeking such court orders in the courts. Once a notice of closure has been served upon a premises the court hearing has to be heard within 48 hours. There are no reports of this legal requirement not being met. Feedback from police and others involved in closures made so far are very positive about the process.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206794]

Mr. Leslie: The information requested is as follows:

(a) 2002–03 Session

Courts Act 2003

s 57—assaulting and obstructing court security officers.

s 95—Inserts a new section (1A) into the Criminal Justice Act 1991 to extend the offences in that section to make it an offence for a person charged to fail to provide means information when there has been an official request to do so.

s 96—inserting new s 24(2A) and (2B) in the Criminal Justice Act 1991—failure to provide information/providing false information relating to fines.

Schedule 3, inserting a new s 8D in the Magistrates Courts Act 1980—reporting pre-trial hearings.

Schedule 5 paragraph 48—fines: failure to provide information/providing false information.

Schedule 5, paragraph 49—meddling with a vehicle clamp.

Schedule 6, paragraph 2—failure to provide information/providing false information in relation to statement of means for work order.

(b) 2003–04 Session

Gender Recognition Act 2004

s 22—prohibition on disclosure of information

European Parliamentary and Local Elections (Pilots) Act 2004

s 6—personation: arrestable offence (extension of an existing offence).

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209115]

Mr. Leslie: During 2003–04 my Departments central procurement and estates function let 26 new contracts, for national/regional provision, and with an individual value in excess of £100,000. The estimated total value of these contracts is around £17 million.

The total number of contracts let by my Department, including orders placed against existing contracts, contracts placed locally, and contracts below £100,000 is not held centrally and could only be established at disproportionate cost.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207824]

Mr. Leslie: The Freedom of Information Act does not make specific categories of information available, but operates on the presumption that all information held by public authorities should be available, subject to the 24 exemptions of the Act.

Whether or not information is exempt under the Act requires the exercise of judgment in each case. The majority of the exemptions also require that the public interest in releasing the information should be weighed against the public interest in withholding it. If the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in withholding it the information must be disclosed. The assessment of the public interest has to be made in all the circumstances of the case, on a case-by-case basis as far as each request is concerned.

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will provide a list of the contact points for each Government Department for all applications for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [210291]

Mr. Leslie: The following is a list of Freedom Of Information contacts for each of the Government Departments.

Cabinet Office

Openness Team
Cabinet Office
Room 4.45
Admiralty Arch
The Mall
London SW1A 2WH
Telephone: 020 7270 1234
Email: openess.team@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Constitutional Affairs

Selborne House
54 Victoria Street
London SW1E 6QW
Telephone: 020 7189 2438
Email: dca.foi@dca.gsi.gov.uk
general.queries@dca.gsi.gov.uk

Scotland Office

Ministerial Offices
Parliamentary and Constitutional Division
Dover House
Whitehall London
SW1A 2AU

Telephone: 020 7270 6754
Facsimile: 020 7270 681
Email: scottish.secretary@scotlan.gov.uk

Wales Office
The Wales Office
Office of the Secretary of State for Wales
Gwydyr House,
Whitehall,
London SW1A 2ER
Email: wales.office@walesoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 020 7270 0540

Department for Culture Media and Sport
Head of Information Management Projects
Information Management Unit
Department for Culture Media and Sport
2–4 Cockspur Street
London SW1Y5DH
Email: FOI@culture.gsi.gov.uk
Telephone: 020–7211 2024
Facsimile:020 7211 2220

Ministry of Defence
Freedom of information unit
Room 831, St Giles Court,
1/13 St Giles High Street,
London WC2H 8LD
Email: infoaccess-pmad@defence.mod.uk

Department of Work and Pensions
Department for Work and Pensions
Room 112
The Adelphi
1–11 John Adam Street
London
WC2N 6HT
Telephone: 020 7712 2171
Email: peo@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
26 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2WH
Telephone: 020 7944 4400
Email: enquiryodpm.gsi.gov.uk

Office of the Leader of the House of Commons
Freedom of Information Officer
2 Cartton Gardens
London SW1Y 5AA
Telephone: 020 7210 1025
Facsimile: 020 7210 1075
Email: leader@commonsleader.X.gsi.gov.uk

Privy Council Office
Freedom of Information Officer
Privy Council Office
2 Carlton Gardens
London SW1Y 5AA
Telephone: 020 7210 3000
E-mail: foi@pco.x.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Education and Skills
Public Enquiry Unit
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT
Telephone: 0870 000 2288
Textphone: 01928 794274
Facsimile: 01928 79 4248
Email: info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Information Resource Centre
Lower Ground Floor
Ergon House
17 Smith Square
London SW1P 3JR
Telephone: 020 7238 6575
Email: defra.library@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Freedom of Information/Data Protection Team
Information Management Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Old Admiralty Building, Whitehall
London SW1A 2PA
Telephone: 020 7008 0123
Email: dp-foi.imd@fco.gov.uk

Department of Health
Customer Service Centre
Richmond House
79, Whitehall
London SW1A 2NL
Telephone: 020 7210 4850
Minicom: 020 72105025
Email: dhemail@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Home Office
50 Queen Anne's Gate
London SW1H 9AT
Telephone: 0870 000 1585
Facsimile: 020 7273 2065
Textphone: (0900–1700) 020–7273 3476
Email: public.enquiries@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Northern Ireland Office
Information Services
Castle Buildings
Belfast
Northern Ireland
BT4 3TT
Telephone: 028 9052 0700
Textphone: 028 9052 7668
Email: http://www.nio.gov.uk/index/foi.htm

Department of Trade and Industry
Room LG139
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H OET
Telephone: 020 7215 5000
Facsimile: 020 7215 5713
Email: dti.enquiries@dti.gsi.gov.uk

Department for Transport

Enquiry Service
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Telephone: 020 7944 8300
Email: enquiryodpm@odpm.gsi.gov.uk

HM Treasury

Freedom of information unit
1 Horse Guards Road
London SW1A 2HQ
Telephone: 020 7270 6408
Email: public.enquires@hm-treasury.gsi.gov.uk

Department for International Development

Public Enquiry Point
Telephone: 0845 300 4100 (local call rate from within the UK)
Telephone: +44 1355 84 3132 (from outside the UK)
Facsimile: +44 (0)1355 84 3632
Email: enquiry@dfid.gov.uk
1 Palace Street
London SW1E 5HE
Telephone: 020 7023 0000
Facsimile: 020 7023 0019

Legal Aid

John Mann: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the legal aid bill for defending drug addicts in court was in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [210145]

Mr. Leslie: The information requested is not available. A defendant charged with murder or robbery for example may well be a drug addict but that information is not recorded centrally.

Mental Capacity Bill

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the purposes will be of the Government amendments to the Mental Capacity Bill which he has indicated will be tabled in the other House. [209802]

Mr. Lammy: At Report Stage of the Mental Capacity Bill the Government undertook to amend the Bill in two key areas. The amendments fulfilling these commitments have now been tabled for debate at Committee in the House of Lords. They provide additional reassurance sought by the House in two key areas. The first amendment relates to decisions about life-sustaining treatment in the context of best interests determinations for people who lack capacity. It provides that when someone is making a decision about whether the provision of life-sustaining treatment is in the best interests of a person lacking capacity, he cannot be motivated by any desire that the person lacking capacity should die—for whatever reason. The amendment tabled in the House of Lords on 18 January will replace the existing clause 4(5). It states:

> "Where the determination relates to life-sustaining treatment he must not, in considering whether the treatment is in the best interests of the person concerned, be motivated by a desire to bring about his death."

This emphasises that the person assessing best interests must look only at the treatment which might be given, for example its possible benefits and burdens. He must not bring into the process any wish or desire to end the person's life. This should lay to rest any lingering doubt that the Bill will permit euthanasia.

The second area of amendments concerns advance decisions to refuse treatment. The amendments tabled on 18 January mean that an advance decision will have no application to any treatment which a doctor considers necessary to sustain life unless strict formalities have been complied with. These are that the decision must be in writing, signed and witnessed. In addition, there must be an express statement that the decision stands "even if life is at risk". These amendments build on the already significant safeguards in the Bill surrounding advance decisions, and respond in particular to points raised by the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that the Secretary of State has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209227]

Mr. Leslie: There is no full record kept of cancelled engagements in the Lord Chancellor's diary. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to Ministerial and Parliamentary business.

Sir Mark Thatcher

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will recommend to Her Majesty the Queen the removal of the hereditary baronetcy from Sir Mark Thatcher. [210680]

Mr. Leslie: It would require primary legislation to remove a Baronet's title and the Government have no plans to introduce such legislation.

Voting Eligibility

Mr. Heald: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the UK residency requirements are to vote in general elections; and if he will make a statement on the eligibility of *(a)* citizens from the European Union who are not UK or Irish citizens and *(b)* non-EU migrants with a right to remain to vote in general elections in the UK. [210348]

Mr. Leslie: Residence for the purpose of eligibility to be included in electoral registers entitling electors to vote at UK general elections is not defined in law but has been ruled by the courts to entail a considerable degree of permanence. Electoral Registration Officers decide in the light of the relevant circumstances whether a person may be said to be resident at a particular address. Eligibility to vote in general elections in the UK does not extend to *(a)* citizens of European Union States who are not UK or Irish citizens, unless they are also resident qualifying Commonwealth citizens (Cypriot or Maltese) and *(b)* non-EU migrants with a right to remain unless they also are resident Commonwealth citizens whose right is still extant.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what further measures are planned to help combat opium production in Afghanistan. [209290]

Mr. Rammell: The UK, as lead nation, remains committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. We are working with the Afghan Government and others to increase activity in all areas of their strategy over the coming year—the principles of which were underlined by President Karzai during the first Afghan Counter Narcotics National Conference held at the beginning of December shortly after his inauguration. As well as co-ordinating the activity of international partners, we are providing substantial financial and practical support—spending more than £100 million over the period 2003–06.

I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS. Since then, we have already seen a number of developments, such as the start of the Criminal Justice Task Force training programme in December, which will help to bring about the successful prosecution of drugs traffickers. So far over the last financial year, we have run seven training courses on intelligence and investigation techniques for the Afghan Counter-Narcotics Police; supported over five major seizures; provided a mobile forensic laboratory; and helped to establish regional law enforcement offices in seven provincial centres outside Kabul.

In addition, the UK works closely with Afghanistan's neighbours, including providing assistance, to help their efforts to counter the flow of opiates from Afghanistan.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent estimate has been made of the percentage of the UK's heroin supply coming from Afghanistan. [209292]

Mr. Rammell: HM Customs and Excise estimate that approximately 25–30 tonnes of heroin is smuggled into the UK each year and that over 95 per cent. originates from Afghanistan. This represents less than 10 per cent. of Afghanistan's potential heroin production in 2004.

The UK, as lead nation, is committed to supporting the Afghan Government in the implementation of their comprehensive National Drug Control Strategy. I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on Afghanistan: Counter Narcotics on 29 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 17–18WS.

African Union Summit (Gabon)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department sent observers to the African Union summit in Gabon; and if he will make a statement. [209087]

Mr. Mullin: We did not send observers to the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council meeting in Libreville, Gabon on 10 January 2005. We do however, follow closely the AU's development. I will attend the next AU summit in Abuja later this month.

Armament Sales (China)

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he makes an evaluation of the human rights performance of recipient countries in decisions on their eligibility to purchase British armaments. [209942]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: The United Kingdom has one of the strictest and most transparent arms export licensing systems of any country. All export licence applications are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time and other announced Government policies. The criteria include our commitment not to issue an export licence if there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression. The Government will also exercise special caution and vigilance in issuing licences to countries where serious violations of human rights have been established by the competent bodies of the UN, the Council of Europe or by the EU.

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the governments of China's neighbouring countries on the lifting of the EU's embargo on the sale of armaments to the People's Republic of China. [209945]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: The review of the EU Arms Embargo on China and any decisions arising from it are to be undertaken by the EU only. But in discussions, China and other countries in the region have expressed an interest in the issue. The EU will take all relevant factors into account in the review.

The European Council in December 2004 discussed the embargo and invited the Luxembourg Presidency of the EU to take forward work on the review. The Council underlined that the result of any decision should not be an increase of arms exports from EU member states to China, neither in quantitative terms nor in qualitative terms. The European Council also recalled the importance of the criteria of the EU Code of Conduct on arms exports, including criteria regarding stability and security in the region.

Burma

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the oral statement of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1674–82, on European Affairs, if he will name the state to which he refers in column 1679 as holding strong commercial interests in Burma; which companies are involved; what representations he has received from these companies; and if he will make a statement. [207116]

Mr. Straw: No. I have nothing further to add to my statement.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will urge the Association of the South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) *(a)* to suspend Burma from the organisation and *(b)* not to proceed with Burma's chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006. [209055]

Mr. Alexander: The terms of membership of ASEAN is an internal matter for its members.

However, we take advantage of our regular bilateral and multilateral contacts with all ASEAN nations to encourage substantive change in Burma. The prospect of Burmese chairmanship of ASEAN in 2006 makes the need for change all the more pressing.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the scale of the impact of the Asian tsunami disaster on Burma in addition to the official reports of damage and casualties made by the Burmese Government. [209369]

Mr. Alexander: Burma has been largely spared the destructive forces of the earthquake and subsequent tsunami. The initial emergency needs have been met by the Burmese regime and by the aid community. The assessment of the scale of impact by the Tsunami Assistance Co-ordination Group (chaired by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and made up of representatives of the UN organisations and various other international NGOs) is in line with the Burmese Government's own findings with a death toll of approximately 60–80 people. It is estimated that 5,000–7,000 have been directly affected through a loss of their homes, with a further 10,000–15,000 suffering a loss of livelihood.

Non-governmental organisations in Thailand estimate that up to 2,500 Burmese migrant workers may have been killed in Southern Thailand.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Burmese chairmanship of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2006; and what the implications of the Burmese chairmanship are for the UK's relations with ASEAN. [209370]

Mr. Alexander: We are concerned about plans for Burma to take over the Chairmanship of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2006 unless there is real progress towards genuine democratisation in Burma. We use our regular bilateral and multilateral contacts with all ASEAN members to encourage them to press the military regime in Burma to enter into a meaningful dialogue with the democratic movement and ethnic groups as soon as possible. The prospect of Burmese chairmanship of ASEAN makes the need for change all the more pressing.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the UN Security Council regarding human rights abuses in Burma. [209371]

Mr. Alexander: We have raised our concerns on the situation in Burma, including the many human rights violations there, in the UN and with our Security Council Partners. However, there is no consensus at present to bring Burma before the Security Council.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208035]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) employs approximately 6,000 UK-based staff and approximately 9,500 locally engaged staff. All locally engaged staff work overseas. At any one time, approximately 2,000 staff (12.9 per cent.) work in the FCO's buildings in London and about 1,200 (7.7 per cent.) at Hanslope Park, near Milton Keynes.

European Constitution Referendum

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's plans for the proposed referendum on the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [208547]

Mr. MacShane: The Gracious Speech on 23 November announced that a Bill would be introduced to give effect to the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe, subject to a referendum. The Bill will set out provisions for the holding of the referendum.

Free Trade Unions

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which countries have been assisted by his Department in the development of free trade unions. [208975]

Mr. Alexander: Free trade unions can have a vital role to play in the development of democracy, human rights and economic prosperity. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has sought to promote the development of free trade unions in many parts of the world. For example, the FCO has supported the development of better labour market practices through programmes within the Global Opportunities Fund. These countries have included China, Serbia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The delivery of the programmes has often involved close working between the FCO and the UK trade unions. The FCO has also provided logistical support and briefing to UK trade unions in their own work in seeking to promote the development of free trade unions in various countries. These have included Iraq, China, Zimbabwe, the Occupied Territories and Israel. The FCO has established a strong partnership with the Trades Union Congress in Britain in support of many of these activities and initiatives. For example, the FCO set up a conference for regional trades unionists in Antigua in 2004 in close consultation with the TUC.

Illegal Logging

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking in conjunction with other Government Departments to encourage developed countries to collaborate to discourage *(a)* the practice of illegal logging and *(b)* trade in forest products. [209379]

Mr. Rammell: The UK plays a key role in international efforts to combat illegal logging and to encourage sustainable forest management. This will be an objective for our presidencies of the G8 and EU in 2005.

The UK is working with EU partners on the development of the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan. This includes the development of EU legislation to prevent illegal timber from entering into the European market and negotiation of Voluntary Partnership Agreements with key timber producing countries. These agreements will require partner countries to establish schemes to license legally produced timber. Timber originating in FLEGT partner countries will not be permitted to be imported into the EU without such licences. The UK also supports Forest Law Enforcement and Governance regional initiatives in Africa and Asia to help developing countries strengthen their forest governance and trade.

As part of this overall approach, the UK Government have been seeking, since July 2000, to purchase their timber from legal and sustainable sources and have been promoting the benefits of this policy to other countries, particularly those that import significant quantities of timber.

The UK works through key multilateral environment agreements and other international fora, including the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species, Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Forum on Forests, to encourage sustainable use of forest products and protection and conservation of endangered species.

Iraq

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which UK private security firms and personnel are employed in Iraq. [209281]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The Government employ Control Risks Group and ArmorGroup to provide security for our staff in Iraq. ArmorGroup are also contracted by the Government to provide 40 international police advisers in southern Iraq. There are a number of other UK based security firms and personnel working in Iraq which are contracted to other employers.

We do not have a list of these firms. However, we encourage all British nationals in Iraq to register with the British embassy in Baghdad or the offices of the British embassy in Basra and Kirkuk.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's assessment of the allegations of corruption in connection with the operation of the United Nations' oil for food programme in Iraq. [210255]

Mr. Rammell: The Government take very seriously all allegations of corruption surrounding the UN's Oil for Food (OFF) programme in Iraq. The Government are concerned about the assessment made by the Iraq Survey Group on the likely nature and scale of OFF corruption in its report of 6 October 2004. The Government are co-operating fully with the Independent Inquiry Committee appointed by the UN in April 2004 to investigate these allegations. It would be inappropriate to comment on any specific allegations of wrongdoing until the inquiry is completed.

Lusitania

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government will be represented at 90th anniversary commemorations of the sinking of the Lusitania close to the Old Head of Kinsale or elsewhere; and if he will make a statement. [209596]

Mr. Alexander: I am not aware of an invitation for the Government to be represented at any anniversary commemorations of the sinking of the Lusitania.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209221]

Mr. Straw: Engagements I take on are cancelled very rarely, and then only if this is unavoidable. We do not however keep records of any such cancellations.

Nigeria

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the potential for political instability in Nigeria following recent increased levels of civil unrest emanating from the national elections of 2003. [209637]

Mr. Mullin: We do not believe the situation in Nigeria has worsened significantly since the April 2003 elections, although there have been some worrying outbreaks of violence, notably in Plateau State and the Niger Delta. We judge the principal cause of such incidents is over control of resources and political power. Officials from the British High Commission in Nigeria have been in close touch with the Federal and relevant State authorities on these events.

Press Officers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many press officers are employed in the Department. [206532]

Mr. Straw: As at April 2004, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office employed 18 press officers within its main press office in London. This figure excludes press and public affairs officers posted to British overseas missions.

There are approximately 180 officers, both UK-based and locally engaged, employed within our missions overseas who spend a percentage of their time on press and public affairs. Some of these are full time. An exact breakdown of these figures is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Seal Pups

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Canadian Government about the culling of seal pups in the forthcoming season; and if he will make a statement. [209273]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* We last made formal representations to the Canadian Government in 1999 and the matter was raised again in May 2004. The Canadian authorities are fully aware of our views. We do not accept the need for any seal cull, but if one does take place it should be sustainable and based on a precautionary principle.

Sexual Abuse (UN Peacekeeping Troops)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN on allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeeping troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and whether he has discussed this matter with the governments of the countries concerned. [209171]

Mr. Rammell: The recent reports of allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is disturbing. We have fully supported the actions of the UN Secretary-General in appointing Prince Zeid of Jordan as his special adviser on this issue. In addition, we have had detailed discussions with officials of other governments to decide how best to ensure that this issue is properly dealt with in the United Nations. We have agreed that the Special Committee on Peacekeeping during their meeting at the end of January will ask the UN Secretary-General to commission a full report and to come back to the Security Council with concrete recommendations and to ensure that any recommendations are implemented.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role the Government are playing in assisting peace talks between the Government of Sudan and rebel organisations in the Darfur region. [209173]

Mr. Mullin: A UK observer attends the Abuja peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the rebel organisations in Darfur where he presses both sides to reach agreement on political issues. We are urging both sides to fully implement the provisions of the Security and Humanitarian protocols signed in Abuja as part of this process, and to participate constructively when the talks reconvene.

Yemen

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what percentage of his Department's resources have been dedicated to diplomatic representation in Yemen in the last 10 years. [208400]

Mr. Rammell: The percentage of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's budget spent in Yemen from 1 April 1998 is as follows:

	Percentage
1998–99	0.10
1999–2000	0.15
2000–01	0.25
2001–02	0.26
2002–03	0.28
2003–04	0.28

No figures are held centrally for the years 1994–95 to 1997–98.

Zimbabwe

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the current human rights situation in Zimbabwe. [209610]

Mr. Mullin: The human rights situation in Zimbabwe remains bad. Zimbabweans are subject to political violence and intimidation. Attacks on what little is left of the independent media continue, and an NGO bill about to become law will restrict the freedom of civil society. There is no indication that parliamentary elections in March will be genuinely free and fair. We continue, with our international partners, to promote a return to democratic governance and the rule of law.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Leader of the House what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his office in the last three years. [207810]

Mr. Hain: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs earlier today in column 140W.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the official engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209228]

Mr. Hain: There is no record kept of cancelled engagements in my diary. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to reinstate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many deaths in *(a)* North Staffordshire and *(b)* Stoke on Trent alcohol was the primary cause in each of the past five years. [209906]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Fisher, dated 24 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for how many deaths in *(a)* North Staffordshire and *(b)* Stoke on Trent, alcohol was the primary cause in each of the past five years. (209906)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. Figures in the attached table show number of deaths where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use, in the years 1999 to 2003 among residents in the former Health Authority of North Staffordshire and the Unitary Authority of Stoke on Trent.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption. Apart from deaths due to accidental poisoning with alcohol, this definition excludes external causes of death, such as road traffic deaths and other accidents, and alcohol-related suicides and homicides. Estimates of the annual total number of deaths in which alcohol has played a role can therefore vary widely depending on the criteria used. The definition used by ONS allows for consistent comparisons over time for those deaths where a clear association with alcohol consumption can generally be assumed.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] in the former health authority of North Staffordshire (which comprises the four primary care trusts of: Staffordshire Moorlands, Newcastle-under-Lyme, North Stoke and South Stoke) and Stoke on Trent unitary authority[2], 1999 to 2003[3]

Number of deaths

	Former North Staffordshire health authority	*Stoke on Trent unitary authority*
1999	61	35
2000	60	39
2001	62	39
2002	69	40
2003	90	50

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed below:
291(Alcoholic psychoses
303(Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0(Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5(Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571(Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860(Accidental poisoning by alcohol.
For the years 2001–2003 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10(Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
I42.6(Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70(Alcoholic liver disease
K73(Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74(Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45(Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in: Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Usual residents of these areas.

[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Corporation Tax

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2004, *Official Report*, columns 981–82W, on corporation tax, if he will provide the information which he collects for the most recent years for which it is available. [210635]

Dawn Primarolo: It is not possible separately to identify from central corporation tax records national governing bodies for sport or international sporting headquarters in the UK. These governing bodies are grouped under 'recreational services' which include many other service types such as radio and television, leisure facilities and self-employed artists.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letters from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated *(a)* 13 December 2004 with regard to Ms Amaal Azi, *(b)* 9 December 2004 with regard to Mr. Ken Wych and *(c)* 10 December 2004 with regard to Ms Jade Summer. [209853]

Dawn Primarolo: I have replied to letters referred to under *(a)* and *(c)*. Letter regarding Mr. Ken Wych, dated 6 December, was transferred to the Department for Works and Pensions on 9 December and notified to you.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he intends to answer the letter dated 23 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Carl Walker. [210832]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Council Tax

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many dwellings in Stoke on Trent are in council tax bands *(a)* A, *(b)* B, *(c)* G and *(d)* H; and what percentage of all dwellings in Stoke on Trent each represents. [209912]

Dawn Primarolo: As at 25 October 2004 the number of dwellings banded in Stoke-on-Trent totalled 109,716.

	Number of dwellings banded	*Percentage*
(a) Band A	68,809	63
(b) Band B	21,207	19
(c) Band G	123	0.1
(d) Band H	46	0.04

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of the council tax rebate grant paid to Scottish local authorities was *(a)* this year and *(b)* in each of the last three years. [210364]

Mr. Boateng: Council tax benefit is paid by the Department for Work and Pensions to council tax payers in Scotland in the same way as in the remainder of Great Britain; grants to Scottish local authorities are a devolved matter for the Scottish Executive.

Death Certification

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he proposes to take regarding the release of certified death records to appropriate private sector bodies in order to facilitate the prevention of fraud through impersonation of the deceased. [209840]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the Registrar General, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Alan Whitehead, dated 24 January 2005:

As Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the release of certified death records to the private sector for fraud prevention purposes. (209840)

The Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 is quite specific as to the means of access to records of deaths held by registration officers and myself. The Act gives persons the right to search the indexes in order to identify the entries they are looking for and to obtain certified copies (certificates) on payment of the statutory fee. Neither registration officers nor I have any powers to disclose or share information in any other way.

Proposals in the form of the draft Regulatory Reform (Registration of Births and Deaths England and Wales) Order 2004, presented to Parliament on 22 July 2004, contained a draft provision that would have enabled me to provide list cleaning services that would have assisted the private sector in combating fraud relating to impersonation of the deceased. The House of Commons' Regulatory Reform Committee and House of Lords' Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee, whose first scrutiny reports were published in December 2004, decided that the draft Order should not proceed to its second stage scrutiny as it was an inappropriate use of the order-making powers in the Regulatory Reform Act 2001. The Government is now considering its next steps for modernisation of the civil registration service.

My officials continue to be in contact with representative Private Sector Bodies to discuss how this issue can be addressed.

Debt Relief

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has held discussions with experts in institutions in the City of London to seek advice on new methods of restructuring and financing international debt. [210284]

Mr. Timms: Treasury Ministers and officials regularly exchange views with financial sector experts on a wide number of issues, including new methods of restructuring and financing international debt.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the effect that debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries will have on *(a)* foreign direct investment and *(b)* private bank lending; [210285]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect that debt relief will have on the international credit standing of each heavily indebted poor country; [210286]

(3) what research he has conducted into the effect on each heavily indebted poor country's credit standing of debt relief by *(a)* Paris Club countries and *(b)* other countries. [210287]

Mr. Timms: The majority of HIPCs have no access to the capital markets, and are dependent on grants and concessional financing from the official sector. The Enhanced HIPC Initiative, and our proposals for deeper multilateral debt relief, are designed to deliver genuine debt sustainability to the world's poorest countries, and to free up resources for the investments in health, education, and infrastructure necessary to achieve the millennium development goals.

Countries need the right preconditions in terms of physical infrastructure and human capital to be able to take advantage of the opportunities offered by international trade and investment. That means increased levels of public sector investments are the essential counterparts to private investment. The World Bank estimates that effective aid 'crowds in' private investment by $2 for every $1 of aid.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the balance of trade figures were between the UK and each heavily indebted poor country in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [210288]

Mr. Timms: Balance of trade figures between the UK and each HIPC country for each of the last five years can be found in the Overseas Trade Statistics published by HM Customs and Excise, which is available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence; [206466]

(2) how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997; [206573]

(3) how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206652]

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department spent on travel in each of the last seven years. [209506]

Mr. Timms: The costs for the Treasury of all travel and all subsistence within the UK, all travel and all subsistence overseas over the last two years, and all first class travel for 2003–04 are given in the table. In respect of total costs for earlier years, I refer to the answer given by the then Financial Secretary to the hon. Member for Haltemprice and Howden (David Davis) on 22 July 2004, *Official Report,* column 482W. Further detail in respect of the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code", the "Civil Service Management Code" and the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

£000

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Total UK travel, including first class	437	551
Total UK travel includes:		
Self drive car hire	3	2
Helicopter hire	0	0
Total UK subsistence, including hotel accommodation	49	85

£000

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Total overseas travel, including first class	993	1,332
Total overseas subsistence, including hotel accommodation	260	237
Total first class travel (UK and overseas)	1	380

Note:

The costs of first class travel are sourced from the Treasury's travel management contract, which began in July 2002. 2003–04 is therefore the first year for which a complete figure can be given without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210329]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a radical programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Clwyd, South constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 52 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have nearly been eliminated, with falls of 85 per cent. and 92 per cent. respectively.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Earnings (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the gross *(a)* average and *(b)* median weekly earnings (i) including and (ii) excluding overtime are for (A) male, (B) female and (C) all full-time workers in (1) Scotland and (2) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland; [209795]

(2) how many and what percentage of *(a)* male, *(b)* female and *(c)* all full-time workers in (i) Scotland, (ii) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland and (iii) the United Kingdom earn less than (A) £279.00 per week, (B) £209.62 per week and (C) £168.75 per week in gross pay, (1) including and (2) excluding overtime; [209796]

(3) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* median (i) hourly and (ii) weekly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime are for (X) male, (Y) female and (Z) all full-time workers aged (1) 18 to 21, (2) 22 to 29, (3) 30 to 39, (4) 40 to 49 and (5) over 50 years in (aa) Scotland and (bb) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland; [209812]

(4) what the *(a)* average and *(b)* median (i) hourly and (ii) weekly gross earnings (A) including and (B) excluding overtime are for (X) male, (Y) female and (Z) all full-time workers in the (1) private, (2) public and (3) unclassified sectors in (aa) Scotland and (bb) each of the unitary local authority areas in Scotland. [209813]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply. His answer has been placed in the Library.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council

Mr. Moore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the Government's priorities for the Economic and Financial Affairs Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [209557]

Mr. Timms: As set out in Box 2.4 of the 2004 pre-Budget report, the Government will use their leadership of the G7/8 and the EU to tackle the key challenges of international poverty reduction, structural economic reform, trade reform and climate change.

The Luxembourg-UK Annual Operating Programme sets out further details of priorities for 2005. These include delivering on the Lisbon agenda of more and better jobs, sustainable economic growth and increased competitiveness and regulatory reform. Copies of this are available in the Library of the House.

Employment Levels

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* actual and *(b)* percentage annual changes in job levels for the (i) private and (ii) public sectors were in the last two calendar years. [210282]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 24 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about changes in job levels in the public and private sector. (210282)

The most recent public and private sector job figures published by ONS on the basis of National Accounts definitions were published in the article "Jobs in the public sector: mid-2003" in the July 2004 issue of "Labour Market Trends".

Drawing upon this source, the attached table shows the number of UK jobs in the public and private sectors for each of the years from 2001 to 2003, the latest available data. The table also shows the annual changes and annual percentage changes in these totals.

Job levels for the private and public sectors are obtained from returns from public sector organisations and the Labour Force Survey, and are currently available on an annual basis. Private sector employment is calculated as the difference between overall employment as estimated from the Labour Force Survey, and public sector employment as derived from returns from public sector organisations.

Change in the number of jobs in the public and private sectors: 2001–03

	Public Sector	*Private Sector*
Job Level (Thousand)		
2001	5,203	23,659
2002	5,292	23,703
2003	5,454	23,801

Change in the number of jobs in the public and private sectors; 2001–03

	Public Sector	Private Sector
Increase in jobs over year (Thousand)		
2001	—	—
2002	89	44
2003	162	98
Percentage increase in jobs over year		
2001	—	—
2002	1.7	0.2
2003	3.1	0.4

Source:

Labour Force Survey and returns from public sector organisations.

Haiti

Ms Abbott: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether Haiti will be included in his Department's recent proposals to support the countries least able to pay off World Bank debts by paying 10 per cent. of annual servicing of that debt. [209819]

Mr. Timms: The UK is proposing that the international community provide up to 100 per cent. relief on the debt owed by poor countries to the World Bank, African Development Bank, and IMF. We are leading the way by paying our share of debt payments owed to the World Bank and African Development Bank, and are calling for better use of IMF gold to fund its debt relief costs.

Eligible countries include all post-completion point HIPCs, and all other low income IDA-only countries with suitably robust public expenditure management systems to ensure the savings are directed towards poverty reduction. The current proxy for this is whether the country is receiving direct poverty-reduction budgetary support from the World Bank through the poverty reduction support credit (PRSC). As an IDA-only country Haiti is potentially eligible for assistance under this initiative, and will be able to benefit after it receives support in this form from the World Bank.

Highly Indebted Poor Countries

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much external Government debt is owed by each highly indebted poor country to private financial institutions; and what proportion that sum is of total external debt in each case; [210227]

(2) what the *(a)* total external debt and *(b)* estimated annual repayment of that debt is for the Government of each highly indebted poor country (i) in total and (ii) as a proportion of Government spending; [210251]

(3) how much external Government debt is owed by each highly indebted poor country, broken down by amounts owed to each *(a)* country and *(b)* multilateral institution. [210252]

Mr. Timms: The HIPC Status of Implementation Report published annually by the World Bank and IMF, in conjunction with individual country update reports, provide the data requested. These numbers are all publicly available, and can be found via the following links: http://www.imf.org/external/np/hipc/2004/082004.pdf; http://www.imf.org/external/country/index.htm.

International Finance Facility

Mr. Alan Duncan: To the Chancellor of the Exchequer which countries have agreed to participate in his proposed International Finance Facility; what amounts each participant has agreed to contribute; and on what financial terms. [210296]

Mr. Timms: The IFF will be a temporary financing mechanism to provide an additional $50 billion a year in development assistance between now and 2015. It will "frontload" commitments made at Monterrey by leveraging in money from the international capital markets, against long-term pledges of Monterrey commitments.

42 countries—including France, Italy and Sweden—have given their support to the IFF. We have also received the support of a wide range of non-governmental organizations, faith groups and the business community.

Decisions on the level of financing will be made when the IFF is established.

MRSA

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reasons it is not listed on a death certificate when MRSA has been a contributory factor. [210274]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Norman Baker, dated 24 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for what reason it is not listed on a death certificate when MRSA has been a contributory factor. (210274)

Doctors are required to complete the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death to the best of their knowledge and belief. Guidelines on completing death certificates are included at the front of every book of certificates. Certificates are not available without these instructions.

In accordance with internationally accepted guidelines from the World Health Organization, these instructions tell doctors to include only conditions which they believe contributed to death.

It is up to the individual doctor's clinical judgment to decide whether or not a condition present at or immediately before death contributed to death, and so should be mentioned on the death certificate. In addition, in the case of MRSA, whether the infection was antibiotic resistant or not may not be known to the doctor when completing the certificate.

Office Supplies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department has spent on office supplies in the last 12 months. [209436]

Mr. Timms: In the year ended 31 March 2004, the Treasury spent £308,000 on stationery.

Shellfish Farming

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Crown Estate has received from rents paid by shellfish farmers in *(a)* Orkney, *(b)* Shetland, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* the UK in each of the last 10 years. [209747]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the rents received in Orkney, Shetland, Scotland and the UK, over the last 10 years.

£

	Orkney	*Shetland*	*Mainland and Western Isles*	*Scotland totals*	*England and Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*UK totals*
2003–04	700	20,300	58,300	79,300	6,100	19,100	104,500
2002–03	1,100	15,300	69,200	85,600	6,800	7,600	100,000
2001–02	1,100	10,500	68,300	79,900	4,700	14,100	98,700
2000–01	1,300	7,700	65,100	74,100	1,000	7,900	83,000
1999–2000	1,000	4,900	58,800	64,700	1,700	8,200	74,600
1998–99	900	3,800	59,800	64,500	700	3,900	69,100
1997–98	1,000	1,700	61,200	63,900	600	4,000	68,500
1996–97	900	300	58,100	59,300	1,000	3,700	64,000
1995–96	900	500	57,900	59,300	600	5,400	65,300
1994–95	900	400	59,900	61,200	700	5,400	67,300

Single Currency

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials in his Department are assigned to work on the UK's potential integration with the European Monetary Union. [209437]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor's statement to the House on 9 June 2003 on UK membership of the single currency set out a reform agenda of concrete and practical steps to address the policy requirements identified by the assessment of the five economic tests. A range of officials from across the Treasury contribute to this work.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department has spent on evaluation of the five economic tests for entry to the single currency. [209492]

Mr. Timms: The assessment of the five economic tests was comprehensive and rigorous. The assessment and supporting studies relate to a number of publicly stated Treasury objectives and the cost of producing them was met from within the Treasury's three-year departmental expenditure limits.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the appeal made by the right hon. Member for Birkenhead's constituent, Mr. Edwards, on 9 November 2004, against the decision of the Inland Revenue to recover a tax credit overpayment will be heard. [209701]

Dawn Primarolo: Claimants can appeal against decisions about their entitlement but there is no right of appeal against the recovery of an overpayment. The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26, "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?", which is available on the Department's website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk, explains what claimants can do if they believe they should not be asked to pay back on overpayment.

The Inland Revenue replied to my right hon. Friend and his constituent on 24 November 2004. The Department wrote again to the constituent on 14 December 2004. I have asked the Department to write to my right hon. Friend again in case he requires anything further.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Department has made of the procedures used by the Inland Revenue to recover tax credit overpayments since April 2004; and if he will make a statement. [209877]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue regularly assesses and reviews its procedures for recovering tax credit overpayments.

The Inland Revenue's approach to dealing with overpayments is set out in a Code of Practice "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?". A copy has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer to how many tax credit recipients in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* Moray local authority area tax credit overpayment notices have been issued since April 2004; what percentage of total claimants of tax credits this represents in each case; and if he will make a statement. [209878]

Dawn Primarolo: The amount of any overpayment of tax credits is detailed on the decision notices that the Inland Revenue sends to claimants. Information on the number of decision notices where an overpayment is shown is not available.

For information on the number of tax credit overpayments I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Miss Begg) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 129W.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment the Department has made of the *(a)* financial and *(b)* social impact on tax credit claimants of the tax credit overpayment recovery process; and if he will make a statement. [209879]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average amounts of tax credit overpayments to claimants since April 2004 in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the Moray local authority area are; and if he will make a statement. [209880]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Bolton, South East (Dr. Iddon) on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1596W.

Unemployment (Liverpool)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the levels of long-term *(a)* adult and *(b)* youth unemployment were in Liverpool, Riverside in each of the last eight years. [210256]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mrs. Louise Ellman, dated 24 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in the Liverpool, Riverside Parliamentary Constituency. (210256)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of long-term unemployed people, both youth and adult, who were resident in the Liverpool Riverside Parliamentary Constituency, for each twelve month period ending February from 1999 to 2004, the most recent available period. Information on length of time unemployed is not available for earlier periods.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of young people aged 18 to 24 years old and adults (aged 25 and over) resident in the Liverpool Riverside Parliamentary Constituency claiming JSA benefits for over 12 months or more in each year from 1997 to 2004.

Table 1: Long-term[1] unemployment in Liverpool, Riverside parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Youth unemployed (aged 16–24)*	*Adult unemployed (aged 25 and over)*
1999	[2]—	2,000
2000	[2]—	1,000
2001	[2]—	2,000
2002	[2]—	2,000
2003	[2]—	2,000
2004	1,000	2,000

[1] People unemployed for 12 months or more.

[2] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:

These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Liverpool, Riverside constituency claiming for 12 months or more

Annual averages	*Youth claimants (aged 18–24)*[1]	*Adult claimants (aged 25 and over)*[1]
1997	600	2,585
1998	425	1,985
1999	120	1,755
2000	50	1,550
2001	30	1,275
2002	35	1,085
2003	35	1,020
2004	50	970

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

World Bank/IMF

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has held discussions with *(a)* the World Bank *(b)* the IMF and *(c)* other interested parties to encourage (i) the World Bank and (ii) the IMF (A) to publish the minutes of its meetings, (B) to publish the record of its voting and decisions on lending and policy and (C) to adopt a practice of transparency and openness in its decision making. [210295]

Mr. Timms: The UK is a leading supporter of greater transparency at the IMF and World Bank, and has held extensive discussions with the IMF and World Bank to encourage publication of minutes, lending and policy decisions, and more transparent decision making. These discussions have taken place at ministerial level through the Chancellor and Secretary of State for International Development, and at official level through the UK's Executive Director at the IMF and the World Bank.

There has been significant progress in recent years, with the agreement in 2003 of new IMF guidelines which presume publication of all surveillance, programme and policy documents. Programmes which involve exceptional access to fund resources will not normally be approved unless authorities agree to publish programme documents. In addition, the IMF board's agenda is made public in advance, and decisions are published through Public Information Notices. Discussions are ongoing at the World Bank on the extension of their transparency policy. The Treasury's Annual Report to Parliament on the UK and the IMF, and DFID's Report on the UK and the World Bank, will set out in greater detail the UK's position on transparency in these two institutions.

HEALTH

Alzheimer's

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* men and *(b)* women suffering from Alzheimer's disease within the Greater London area. [209924]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Care Homes (Cleanliness)

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what obligation is placed on the Health Protection Agency to carry out an investigation when a care home resident dies of MRSA; and what such an inquiry involves. [204585]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Care home providers are required to notify the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) of the circumstances of a care home resident's death. The CSCI may decide to investigate those circumstances. Ministers may also cause an inquiry to be held. Where a resident dies of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus, the Health Protection Agency (HPA) is under no obligation to carry out an investigation. However, if invited, the HPA could provide expert advice and support to any investigation instigated by CSCI or by a coroner.

Clinical Critical Mass

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects on clinical critical mass in hospital trusts of the independent sector treating a high percentage of simpler cases of elective admissions. [209609]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: Separating out routine elective procedures allows hospitals to focus on emergencies and more complicated cases. Treatment centres, of which more than half are actually directly in the national health service, allow for faster treatment of NHS patients at up to eight times faster than traditional NHS services.

Independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) provide extra capacity over and above expanding NHS capacity and have been negotiated to ensure that the ISTC programme meets the needs of the NHS locally.

Dentistry

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will lay before Parliament the General Dental Council and the Dentists Act (Amendment) Order 2005. [209507]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Dentists Act 1984 (Amendment Order) 2005 will be laid in the spring.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists there are in each county in England per 10,000 of the population; how many accept NHS patients; and what the figures were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [202691]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[pursuant to her reply, 16 December 2004, Official Report, c. 1312W]*: I regret my previous reply was incorrect. It should read as follows:

The number of general and personal dentists at September in the years 1997, 2001 and 2004 in each county in England per 100,000 of the population, is shown in the table. All of these dentists are doing national health service work.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in each county in England at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

County	Dentists per 100,000 of population 1997	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2001	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2004
Bedfordshire	33	49	50
Buckinghamshire	46	51	54
Cambridgeshire	34	40	46
Cheshire	46	49	53
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	36	44	46
Cumbria	38	40	44
Derbyshire	35	40	45
Devon	40	49	48
Dorset	36	41	41
Durham	34	33	37
East Sussex	43	45	48
Essex	38	41	41
Gloucestershire	45	51	54
Hampshire	36	43	47
Hertfordshire	51	58	62
Kent	42	42	45
Lancashire	37	39	42
Leicestershire	30	32	34
Lincolnshire	24	29	31
Norfolk	39	45	47
Northamptonshire	29	29	37
Northumberland	37	37	40
North Yorkshire	38	41	48
Nottinghamshire	36	42	40
Oxfordshire	39	49	54
Shropshire	35	43	52
Somerset	38	43	48
Staffordshire	30	34	36
Suffolk	38	41	44
Surrey	51	61	63
Warwickshire	32	39	51
West Sussex	44	54	66
Wiltshire	34	39	36
Worcestershire	39	49	58

Source:

Dental Practice Board and resident population figures 1997, 2001 and 2004

Some areas do not have county status even though they may lie within county boundaries. For these areas, the number of general and personal dental service dentists is given by local authority area. This information is given in the following table.

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in local authorities not defined by county at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

Local authority	Dentists per 100,000 of population 1997	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2001	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2004
Barking and Dagenham	30	36	35
Barnet	59	64	62
Barnsley	37	40	37
Bath and North East Somerset	50	57	62
Bexley	41	41	44
Birmingham	37	40	44
Blackburn with Darwen	41	43	44
Blackpool	36	39	41
Bolton	42	41	38
Bournemouth	47	55	54
Bracknell Forest	41	44	55
Bradford	36	37	39
Brent	61	63	65
Brighton and Hove	49	54	59
Bristol, City of	48	54	54
Bromley	48	52	57
Bury	44	40	46
Calderdale	37	38	38
Camden	81	82	76
City of London	212	82	144
Coventry	31	37	41
Croydon	53	56	[illegible]
Darlington	33	43	49
Derby	36	42	47
Doncaster	35	38	39
Dudley	31	35	38
Ealing	71	63	64
East Riding of Yorkshire	25	28	31
Enfield	42	47	56
Gateshead	44	48	45
Greenwich	45	46	50
Hackney	45	41	38
Halton	32	36	39

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in local authorities not defined by county at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

Local authority	Dentists per 100,000 of population 1997	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2001	Dentists per 100,000 of population 2004
Hammersmith and Fulham	81	89	86
Haringey	60	56	60
Harrow	50	58	63
Hartlepool	30	30	28
Havering	38	47	52
Herefordshire, County of	42	49	51
Hillingdon	43	49	51
Hounslow	68	72	69
Isle of Wight	31	32	32
Islington	51	75	65
Kensington and Chelsea	58	51	49
Kingston upon Hull, City of	30	38	37
Kingston upon Thames	48	52	53
Kirklees	38	43	41
Knowsley	35	39	43
Lambeth	50	52	58
Leeds	41	44	43
Leicester	45	44	45
Lewisham	47	54	50
Liverpool	44	43	45
Luton	36	48	48
Manchester	53	51	51
Medway	38	39	45
Merton	43	46	49
Middlesbrough	48	56	57
Milton Keynes	39	47	49
Newcastle upon Tyne	47	51	62
Newham	37	38	39
North East Lincolnshire	29	32	31
North Lincolnshire	23	29	28
North Somerset	46	52	57
North Tyneside	34	34	38
Nottingham	43	45	64
Oldham	39	37	34
Peterborough	33	42	57
Plymouth	39	49	50
Poole	35	40	63
Portsmouth	32	39	41
Reading	51	52	75
Redbridge	48	60	60
Redcar and Cleveland	41	41	40
Richmond upon Thames	57	61	61
Rochdale	35	33	33
Rotherham	36	39	33
Rutland	55	46	42
Salford	42	44	52
Sandwell	40	43	47
Sefton	42	43	42
Sheffield	40	43	48
Slough	39	45	67
Solihull	34	44	51
South Gloucestershire	41	37	42
South Tyneside	40	39	44
Southampton	34	40	43
Southend-on-Sea	35	41	38
Southwark	46	39	41
St. Helens	36	45	49
Stockport	42	44	48
Stockton-on-Tees	47	54	54
Stoke-on-Trent	30	39	39
Sunderland	31	37	40
Sutton	51	57	60
Swindon	36	42	43
Tameside	35	37	37
Telford and Wrekin	33	35	48
Thurrock	24	28	31
Torbay	46	56	51
Tower Hamlets	36	37	46
Trafford	47	53	52
Wakefield	32	37	34
Walsall	26	28	31
Waltham Forest	37	42	47
Wandsworth	59	65	57
Warrington	39	50	56
West Berkshire	32	40	45
Westminster	113	103	84
Wigan	38	39	40
Windsor and Maidenhead	38	50	63
Wirral	46	52	50
Wokingham	31	38	45
Wolverhampton	31	37	43
York	46	56	60

Number of general and personal dental service dentists per 100,000 of the population in local authorities not defined by county at 30 September 1997, 2001 and 2004

Source:

Dental Practice Board and resident population figures for 1997, 2001 and 2004

Population figures for 1997 and 2001 are resident estimates 2001 based. Population figures for 2004 are resident population projections 2003 based.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists have left the NHS for wholly private practice within the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [209926]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of dentists leaving the general dental service (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS) in the five London strategic health authority (SHA) areas are shown in the table. Dentists are counted as leavers if they are not practising in the general or personal dental service on 30 September, but were working on 30 September in the previous year.

Dentists leaving the general or personal dental service in the five London SHA areas in the 12 month period ending September

	Number of dentists who have left the GDS or PDS
2002	323
2003	231
2004	253

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Dentists will stop practising GDS or PDS dentistry for any one of a number of reasons, including retirement and short-term breaks. Very few dentists stop national health service work altogether in order to do private work.

Dermatology

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the value of competency frameworks for health professionals working in dermatology; and what action he will take to ensure that they are rolled out across the NHS. [209019]

Mr. Hutton: Competency frameworks and national occupational standards are already being used in the national health service to design services that are more flexible and relate directly to patient choices and needs. The aim is to enable individuals to develop career pathways in accordance with local needs and their own abilities, enabling them to progress or gain access to other areas of work based on the competences that they have achieved.

Skills for Health (SFH), the sector skills council for health, is currently considering the development of a competence framework that will cover all health professionals working in dermatology as part of its 2005–06 programme of work.

SFH is very much aware that the competency frameworks it produces need to be backed up with plans to spread their use. It is developing networks and other mechanisms to spread best practice in the use of competencies.

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role the long-term conditions care group workforce team dermatology group has in the development of NHS dermatology services; and if he will make a statement. [209020]

Mr. Hutton: The dermatology sub-group of the long-term conditions care group workforce team was established in May 2003, with a remit including assessing the make-up of the dermatology workforce, informing national planning processes and sharing good and innovative practice on a national and local level. The dermatology sub-group has worked with the British Dermatological Nursing Group to conduct a survey of dermatology nurses working in both primary and secondary care and analysis of the findings is now underway.

The sub-group has also helped develop a primary care nursing skin care course in conjunction with the university of Southampton. Further, the group is currently in the process of identifying a range of service models, that cover all levels of the patient pathway and include examples of good practice.

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he will take to incorporate *(a)* specialist nurses and *(b)* non-consultant career grade doctors within e-booking for dermatology. [209021]

Mr. Hutton: The Choose and Book service is available to be rolled-out to all clinics that receive outpatient referrals from general practitioners. This includes dermatology clinics run by specialist nurses and non-consultant career grade doctors. The implementation of Choose and Book in clinics that do not provide consultant outpatient services is a matter for providers, primary care trusts and strategic health authorities, to decide on locally.

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of e-booking on the *(a)* workload of and *(b)* quality of patient care by dermatology consultants. [209022]

Mr. Hutton: Electronic booking through the choose and book service is expected to have a positive impact on secondary care working practices and has significant potential to reduce consultant workload.

An independent report produced by Yorkshire Institute for Clinical and Health Informatics (December 2003) found that electronic booking reduced did-not attend rates and offers substantial benefits to patients who were able to choose convenient appointments that fitted in with their other commitments at work and home.

DH/EU Co-operation

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions his Department has had with the European Commission on the supporting, co-ordinating and complementary action which may be undertaken by the EU in the field of protection and improvement of human health under article I-17 of the proposed EU constitution. [209588]

Mr. Hutton: None. The Treaty has not yet been ratified by the United Kingdom and several other member states and is therefore not yet in force.

Doctors

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio of doctors per head of population is in England. [210212]

Mr. Hutton: The standard ratio used by the Department is per 100,000 population. The population data used is from the Office for National Statistics population census.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) staff and general medical practitioners, all doctors per 100,000 population

Number (headcount)

England, as at 30 September 2003	*Doctors*	*Population*	*Doctors per 100,000 population*
All Doctors	109,964	49,855,740	220.6
Of which:			
HCHS Doctors[1]	76,480	49,855,740	153.2
General Medical Practitioners[2]	33,564	49,855,740	67.3

[1] Excludes hospital medical hospital practitioners and hospital medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part time in hospitals.

[2] All practitioners include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, GP retainers, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

Sources:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

2001 ONS population census.

Drug Overdoses

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drug overdose admissions there were to accident and emergency departments in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004, broken down by hospital. [209106]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not collected on the number of attendances at accident and emergency departments related to drug overdoses. However, data on the number of emergency admissions via A and E related to drug overdoses by National health service trust for 2002, 2003 and 2004 have been placed in the Library.

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206962]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Guildford (Sue Doughty) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 101W.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209096]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold centrally a record of individual tenders, nor does it have similar details for its agencies. To secure such details would involve disproportionate cost.

Free Eye Tests

Mr. Ivan Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many old age pensioners in the Harwich constituency have benefited from the introduction of free eye tests. [210683]

Dr. Ladyman: Figures for the number of sight tests by constituency are not collected centrally. Information by primary care trust is collected and is available for 2003–04.

The total number of sight tests undertaken on those people of 60 years and above in the Tendring PCT, which includes pensioners in the Harwich constituency, during 2003–04 is 15,967.

The data for 2004–05 are not yet published.

Health Select Committee

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his statement before the Health Select Committee on 8 December 2004, when he will provide the information that he undertook to supply to the Committee in response to the questions from the hon. Member for West Chelmsford. [210193]

Dr. John Reid: I have done so.

Health/Social Care Staff

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans there are to assist the least well-qualified staff in health and social care, in particular through the "Skills Escalator". [202762]

Mr. Hutton: We are committed to supporting all national health service staff, including those least-well qualified, to realise their potential; to the benefit of the NHS, their communities, and themselves. The workforce development strategy, the "Skills Escalator", is one way in which NHS employers can do this.

The "Skills Escalator" is about attracting and enabling a wider range of people to work within the NHS and giving those already in the NHS the opportunity to develop and enhance their skills and take on new and more challenging roles. We are continuing to promote the "Skills Escalator" to the NHS through "Skills for Health".

The NHS Plan (July 2000) pledged major investment to develop staff who do not have professional qualifications. During the three years from April 2003, over £180 million will be invested in support of NHS learning accounts, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), adult literacy, numeracy and language skills (Skills for Life) development. This investment will support learning opportunities for up to 240,000 staff.

Between April 2001 and September 2002 more than 43,000 staff accessed either a NHS learning account or NVQ training—of which over 21,000 undertook NVQ training to levels 2 or 3. Between April 2003 and March 2004 this rose to more than 65,000 staff accessing an NHS learning account and more than 34,000 undertaking NVQ training to levels 2 or 3.

For social care, funding of £15 million is being provided through the Topss England national training strategy grant, with the aim of having an additional 300,000 social care staff qualified to NVQ2 or higher by 2006. Funding is also provided to local councils through the national training strategy grant.

IT Strategy

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in the IT strategy for the NHS. [208360]

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards achieving an online system of *(a)* booking GP appointments, *(b)* health records and *(c)* prescription processing for NHS patients. [209233]

Mr. Hutton: Key components of the national health service care records service were delivered in July 2004 to support electronic booking of appointments. These included support for secure access using smartcards and user authentication, patient demographic information and the protocols for secure messaging, data storage and retrieval. Alongside these elements of the NHS care record, the application for electronic appointment booking for patients went live in early adopter sites in July 2004. Work is now well advanced to introduce electronic prescriptions during early 2005, with the core application delivered for integration testing by the end of 2004 as planned. The new national network is now on track to deliver, and probably exceed, contracted broadband connections by the end of March 2005. Progress has also been made on other national programme for information technology (NPfIT) services, particularly the roll out of the quality management and analysis system (QMAS) application to support the general medical service contract and the implementation of the new contract with Cable and Wireless to deliver the "Contact" e-mail service.

More detailed information can be found in the most recent (December 2004) edition of the NPfIT's newsletter, "Making IT Work", available on the publications page of the NPfIT website at www.npfit.nhs.uk. Printed copies have been placed in the Library.

Language Therapists

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many qualified speech and language therapists are employed by the NHS; how many unfilled vacancies there are; how many are in training; and what the Government target for speech and language therapists in post is. [209525]

Mr. Hutton: There are no specific targets for speech and language therapists, though we expect that the national speech and language therapist workforce will grow in line with local workforce needs.

As at September 2003, there were 6,243 speech and language therapists employed in the national health service, an increase of 28 per cent. since 1997.

In 2003–04, 630 students entered training to become a speech and language therapist, an increase of 38 per cent. since 1999–2000.

The Department's vacancy survey collects information on the number of vacancies lasting three months or more as at 31 March each year. As at March 2004, there were 193 three month vacancies for speech and language therapists, which represents a rate of 3.8 per cent.

Medicines (Licensing)/Regulation

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will take measures to reduce the time between the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency granting a licence to first-in-class medicines and the issuing of guidance by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence; and if he will make a statement; [208181]

(2) if he will instruct primary care trusts to give equal consideration to the routine use of medicines which are not reviewed by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) and those which are to be reviewed by NICE; and if he will make a statement; [208182]

(3) if he will direct the National Institute for Clinical Excellence to issue general guidance for new medicines at the time of their launch, followed by a full review or clinical guidance; and if he will make a statement. [208183]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) develops its guidance after careful consideration of the available evidence, and in close consultation with patient groups, professional organisations and the pharmaceutical industry. Where new drugs are referred to NICE for appraisal, it monitors the licensing position closely and schedules the appraisal so that guidance follows as soon as possible after the granting of a licence. Other sources of advice are available in advance of publication of full NICE guidance, including Medicines Resource Centre publications produced by the National Prescribing Centre and funded by NICE.

In August 1999, the Department issued Health Service Circular 1999/176, which asks national health service bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE is not available at the time the technology first became available. These arrangements should involve an assessment of the available evidence.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the outcome has been of the exploration by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, following its discussions with HM Customs, for the use of effective counter-warnings on foreign websites selling prescription and pharmacy-only medicines direct to the public; what improvements HM Customs have made in recognising and dealing with such packages of medicines; how these improvements are reflected in the number of *(a)* items being impounded or *(b)* prosecutions for breaches of the Medicines Act 1971; and if he will make a statement. [208777]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) controls the advertising, sale and supply of medicines on the United Kingdom market by regulation and enforcement of these regulations. Websites based overseas do not fall within UK jurisdiction and are therefore outside the MHRA's control. Although the MHRA cannot compel a foreign website to comply with UK domestic legislation, if there is a breach, details of the site will be passed on by the MHRA to overseas enforcement authorities.

The MHRA is currently investigating 43 cases involving sale of medicines via the internet. In addition, 30 sites have been identified as being hosted overseas and are being forwarded to the appropriate national regulatory authorities.

There is no restriction on the importation of medicines for personal consumption, unless they contain substances subject to control under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Where Her Majesty's Customs and Excise detect importations of medicines and the quantities involved seem inconsistent with amounts for personal use, Customs officials alert the MHRA on the grounds of public interest. Representatives from Customs and MHRA are engaged in on-going discussions about how this process might be strengthened.

Mental Illness (Smoking Cessation)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of how the proposals on banning smoking in enclosed public places will affect NHS mental health facilities. [203196]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Development Agency will shortly publish guidance for the national health service on the provision of smoke-free buildings to protect staff, patients and others from the health risks of second hand smoke.

In NHS mental health facilities, the hospital is for some patients their main place of residence and therefore their home. We will be consulting on the special arrangements needed for establishments such as these in due course.

Midwives

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwife vacancies there are in *(a)* Kingston hospital and *(b)* South West London, *(c)* Merton, Surrey and Mid-Surrey, *(d)* London and *(e)* England. [209826]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The national health service vacancy survey collects information on the number of vacancies lasting three months or more. Information on the number and rate of three month vacancies for midwives in England, London and the South East is shown in the following table.

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004. Qualified midwifery staff three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post in London and South East Government Office Regions by strategic health authority and organisation.

			March 2004[1]		*September 2003*[1]	
			Three month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three month vacancy (number)*	*Midwives—staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
	England		3.3	619	18,444	23,941
H	*London Government Office Region*		8.2	250	3,026	3,981
Q05	*North Central London SHA*		9.1	49	499	638
	Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	RVL	11.3	20	172	247
	Barnet PCT	5A9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust	RRP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Camden and Islington Mental Health and Social Care Trust	TAF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Camden PCT	5K7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Enfield PCT	5C1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Great Ormond Street Hospital For Children NHS Trust	RP4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Haringey PCT	5C9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Islington PCT	5K8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust	RP6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North Central London SHA	Q05	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RAP	7.8	6	93	117
	Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	RAL	12.2	12	85	105
	Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust	RAN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust	RNK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	University College London Hospitals NHS Trust	RRV	5.5	5	75	85
	Whittington Hospital NHS Trust	RKE	6.4	7	74	84
Q06	*North East London SHA*		6.4	42	694	871
	Barking and Dagenham PCT	5C2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Barking, Havering and Redbridge Hospitals NHS Trust	RF4	10.4	23	219	283
	Bails and The London NHS Trust	RNJ	0.0	n/a	125	150
	City and Hackney PCT	5C3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East London and The City Mental Health NHS Trust	RWK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Havering PCT	5A4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Homerton University Hospital NHS Trust	RQX	6.0	7	133	159
	Newham Healthcare NHS Trust	RNH	12.0	12	91	119
	Newham PCT	5C5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North East London Mental Health NHS Trust	RAT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North East London SHA	Q06	[1]—	n/a	2	2
	Redbridge PCT	5NA	n/a	n/a	1	1
	Tower Hamlets PCT	5C4	n/a	n/a	0	1
	Waltham Forest PCT	5NC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Whipps Cross University Hospital NHS Trust	RGC	0.0	n/a	122	156
Q04	*North West London SHA*		7.4	47	634	842
	Brent PCT	5K5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RV3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	RQM	19.5	23	109	151
	Ealing Hospital NHS Trust	RC3	0.0	n/a	58	69
	Ealing PCT	5HX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hammersmith and Fulham PCT	5H1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	RQN	3.4	4	122	141
	Harrow PCT	5K6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust	RAS	0.0	n/a	92	175
	Hillingdon PCT	SAT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hounslow PCT	SHY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Kensington and Chelsea PCT	5LA	[1]—	n/a	1	1
	North West London Hospitals NHS Trust	RV8	0.0	n/a	109	137
	North West London SHA	Q04	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	RT3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	St. Mary's NHS Trust	RJ5	0.0	n/a	78	87
	West London Mental Health NHS Trust	RKL	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	West Middlesex University NHS Trust	RFW	21.9	20	66	81
	Westminster PCT	5LC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Q07	*South East London SHA*		8.7	64	730	988
	Bexley Care Trust	TAK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust	RG3	7.6	6	74	90
	Bromley PCT	5A7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Greenwich PCT	5A8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Guy's and St. Thomas' NHS Trust	RJ1	9.2	20	204	234
	King's College Hospital NHS Trust	RJZ	1.0	2	151	198

Department of Health vacancies survey, March 2004. Qualified midwifery staff three month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post in London and South East Government Office Regions by strategic health authority and organisation.

			March 2004[1]		*September 2003*[1]	
			Three month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three month vacancy (number)*	*Midwives—staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
	Lambeth PCT	5LD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	RJ2	14.2	13	92	127
	Lewisham PCT	5LF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Oxleas NHS Trust	RPG	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	RG2	9.3	9	106	178
	Queen Mary's Sidcup NHS Trust	RGZ	13.2	14	104	161
	South East London SHA	Q07	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South London and Maudsley NHS Trust	RV5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Southwark PCT	5LE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Q08	*South West London SHA*		10.2	48	468	642
	Croydon PCT	5K9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust	RVR	2.0	3	163	231
	Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	RAX	7.3	7	105	162
	Kingston PCT	5A5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust	RJ6	30.3	38	86	99
	Richmond and Twickenham PCT,	5M6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Royal Marsden Hospital NHS Trust	RPY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South West London and St. George's Mental Health NHS Trust	RQY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South West London SHA	Q08	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	RJ7	0.0	n/a	114	150
	Sutton and Merton PCT	5M7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Wandsworth PCT	5LG	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RRU	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
J	*South East Government Office Region*		4.1	109	2,482	3,373
Q17	*Hampshire and Isle Of Wight SHA*		1.1	6	542	727
	Blackwater Valley and Hart PCT	5G6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Hampshire PCT	5FD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Eastleigh and Test Valley South PCT	SLY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Fareham and Gosport PCT	5LX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hampshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RKD	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hampshire and Isle Of Wight SHA	017	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Isle Of Wight Healthcare NHS Trust	RR2	0.0	n/a	46	68
	Isle Of Wight PCT	5DG	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Mid-Hampshire PCT	5E9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	New Forest PCT	5A1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North Hampshire Hospitals NHS Trust	RN5	0.0	n/a	63	84
	North Hampshire PCT	5DF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Portsmouth City PCT	5FE	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	RHU	0.0	n/a	188	246
	Southampton City PCT	5L1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	RHM	2.6	4	172	222
	West Hampshire NHS Trust	RW1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Winchester and Eastleigh Healthcare NHS Trust	RN1	2.5	2	73	107
Q18	*Kent and Medway SHA*		8.0	43	516	700
	Ashford PCT	5LL	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Canterbury and Coastal PCT	5LM	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust	RN7	0.0	n/a	66	99
	Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley PCT	5CM	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Kent Coastal PCT	5LN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Kent Community NHS Trust	RTM	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	RVV	6.8	13	180	243
	Kent Ambulance NHS Trust	RPH	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Kent and Medway SHA	Q18	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	RWF	14.5	23	146	210
	Maidstone Weald PCT	5L2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Medway NHS Trust	RPA	5.4	7	122	147
	Medway PCT	5L3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Queen Victoria Hospital NHS Trust	RPC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Shepway PCT	5LP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South West Kent PCT	5FF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Swale PCT	5L4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	West Kent NHS and Social Care Trust	RXJ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Q19	*Surrey and Sussex SHA*		5.4	45	739	1,013
	Adur, Arun and Worthing PCT	5L8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Ashford and St. Peter's Hospitals NHS Trust	RTK	9.2	7	65	92
	Bexhill and Rother PCT	5FH	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Brighton and Hove City PCT	5LQ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

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			March 2004[1]		*September 2003*[1]	
			Three month vacancy rate (percentage)	*Three month vacancy (number)*	*Midwives—staff in post (whole-time equivalent)*	*Staff in post (headcount)*
	Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	RXH	5.6	9	152	197
	Crawley PCT	5MA	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey PCT	5KP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Surrey PCT	5KQ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	East Sussex County NHS Trust	RXD	n/a	n/a	0	1
	East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	RXC	0.0	n/a	147	205
	Eastbourne Downs PCT	5LR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Frimley Park Hospital NHS Trust	RDU	2.1	2	109	153
	Guildford and Waverley PCT	5L5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Hastings and St. Leonards PCT	5FJ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Horsham and Chanctonbury PCT	5MC	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Mid-Sussex PCT	5FK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North Surrey PCT	5L6	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North West Surrey Mental Health NHS Partnership Trust	RW7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust	RA2	26.5	26	23	27
	Royal West Sussex NHS Trust	RPR	0.0	n/a	62	94
	South Downs Health NHS Trust	RDR	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RPQ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	RTP	0.7	1	107	135
	Surrey and Sussex SHA	Q19	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust	RTJ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Surrey Oaklands NHS Trust	RTN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RQ2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Sussex Downs and Weald PCT	5LT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	West Sussex Health and Social Care NHS Trust	RW8	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Western Sussex PCT	5L9	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Woking PCT	5L7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust	RPL	0.0	n/a	73	109
Q16	*Thames Valley SHA*		2.1	15	686	933
	Berkshire Healthcare NHS Trust	RWX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Bracknell Forest PCT	5G2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Trust	RWT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust	RXQ	1.2	2	124	190
	Cherwell Vale PCT	5DV	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Chiltern and South Bucks PCT	5G4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Heatherwood and Wexham Park Hospitals NHS Trust	RD7	11.1	13	96	118
	Milton Keynes General Hospital NHS Trust	RD8	0.0	92	121	n/a
	Milton Keynes PCT	5CQ	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Newbury and Community PCT	5DK	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	North East Oxfordshire PCT	5DT	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Nuffield Orthopaedic NHS Trust	RBF	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Oxford City PCT	5DW	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Oxford Radcliffe Hospital NHS Trust	RTH	0.0	247	322	n/a
	Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust	RNY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Oxfordshire Learning Disability NHS Trust	RHX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare NHS Trust	RNU	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Reading PCT	5DL	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	RH1	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust	RHW	0.0	128	182	n/a
	Slough PCT	5DM	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South East Oxfordshire PCT	5DX	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	South West Oxfordshire PCT	5DY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Thames Valley SHA	Q16	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust	RHY	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Vale of Aylesbury PCT	5DP	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Windsor, Ascot and Maidenhead PCT	5G3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Wokingham PCT	5DN	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Wycombe PCT	5G5	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = not applicable.

[1] September 2003—latest data available for midwife numbers, March 2004—latest vacancy data available

Source:

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

NHS Budgets

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the annual percentage increase in total budgets for *(a)* Kingston Hospital and *(b)* the NHS in (i) South West London, (ii) London and (iii) England has been in each year since 1992; [209822]

(2) what the total budgets for *(a)* Kingston Hospital and *(b)* the NHS in (i) South West London,

(ii) London and (iii) England have been in each year since 1992. [209824]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* Information relating to the income of the Kingston Hospital NHS Trust and to total national health service expenditure is shown in the table in cash terms. Figures for London prior to 1996–97 have not been provided as they are not comparable.

	Kingston Hospital NHS Trust		*South West London*		*London*		*Total NHS (England)*	
	Total income (£000)	*Percentage increase*	*Expenditure (£000)*	*Percentage increase*	*Expenditure (£000)*	*Percentage increase*	*Expenditure (£ billion)*	*Percentage increase*
1991–92	41,902	—	—	—	—	—	25.353	13.6
1992–93	45,060	7.5	—	—	—	—	27.968	10.3
1993–94	42,632	-5.4	—	—	—	—	28.942	3.5
1994–95	45,612	7.0	—	—	—	—	30.590	5.7
1995–96	50,659	11.1	—	—	—	—	31.985	4.6
1996–97	54,161	6.9	854,685	—	5,162,461	—	32.997	3.2
1997–98	69,683	28.7	843,672	-1.3	5,008,797	-3.0	34.664	5.1
1998–99	87,878	26.1	910,244	7.9	5,509,058	10.0	36.608	5.6
1999–2000	107,330	22.1	1,076,124	18.2	6,458,945	17.2	40.201	—
2000–01	107,302	0.0	1,156,688	7.5	7,071,988	9.5	43.932	9.3
2001–02	109,951	2.5	1,257,510	8.7	7,799,044	10.3	49.021	11.6
2002–03	131,899	20.0	1,390,747	10.6	8,856,345	13.6	54.042	10.2
2003–04	138,895	5.3	1,495,294	7.5	9,480,299	7.0	63.667	—

Sources:
Audited summarisation schedules of Kingston Hospital NHS Trust
Audited accounts of health authorities 1996–97 to 1997–98
Audited summarisation forms of health authorities 1998–99 to 2001–02
Audited summarisation forms of strategic health authorities 2002–03 and 2003–04
Audited summarisation schedules of primary care trusts 2000–01 to 2003–04
Total net NHS expenditure.

Comparisons year on year will be affected by the local reconfiguration of NHS bodies and services. These may be explained in accounts published by the individual NHS bodies but not collected centrally.

Figures for Kingston Hospital NHS Trust show the total income of the trust, including all income from activities and all other operating income, as budget information is not collected centrally.

Figures for London and South West London are the expenditure by strategic health authorities, predecessor health authorities and primary care trusts within the current five London strategic health authority areas and the South West London strategic health authority area, respectively.

NHS Expenditure by area is taken from audited health authority accounts and primary care trust summarisation schedules, which are prepared on a resource basis and therefore differ from cash allocations in the year. The expenditure is the total expenditure by the relevant health authorities, and the commissioner costs of the primary care trusts.

The total NHS expenditure cannot be identified by health authority area because the majority of general dental services expenditure is not included in the individual health authority accounts or primary care trust summarisation schedules and is separately accounted for by the Dental Practice Board. The majority of pharmaceutical services expenditure is accounted for by the Prescription Pricing Authority and not by health authorities or primary care trusts.

Figures for 2002–03 and 2003–04 based on strategic health authority areas have been adjusted to eliminate expenditure, which would be double counted where an authority acts as a lead in commissioning healthcare.

Total NHS expenditure is the total net NHS expenditure for England where expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis; expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a stage one resource budgeting basis; expenditure figure for 2003–04 are on a Stage two resource budgeting basis. Figures are not consistent over the full period, hence no comparisons should be made across different periods. The percentage increases for 1999–2000 and 2003–04 have therefore not been provided.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the annual percentage increases in total budgets for *(a)* Kingston hospital and *(b)* the NHS in (i) South West London, (ii) London and (iii) England are for (A) 2005–06, (B) 2006–07 and (C) 2007–08; [209823]

(2) what the projected total budgets for *(a)* Kingston hospital and *(b)* the NHS in (i) South West London, (ii) London and (iii) England are for (A) 2005–06, (B) 2006–07 and (C) 2007–08. [209825]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The Department does not allocate funding directly to national health service hospitals. Allocations are made at a primary care trust (PCT) level. Work on 2006–07 and 2007–08 PCT allocations is ongoing. The information requested is shown in the following tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: Primary care trust revenue allocations

	2005–06	
	£ million	*Percentage increase*
South West London	2,260	9.3
London	9,105	9.8
England	53,925	9.3

Table 2: Total net NHS expenditure

	England (£ million)	*Percentage increase*
2005–06	76,384	10.1
2006–07	83,818	9.7
2007–08	92,143	9.9

Notes:

1. Primary care trust allocations are revenue only. Centrally financed services such as Research and Development and training are not included.

2. Total net NHS expenditure includes both revenue and capital expenditure.

NHS Trusts

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people resident in the 20 per cent. most deprived wards are serving as non-executive directors on each NHS trust in the north-west; [209789]

(2) what progress has been made in appointing more people from Warrington, North to NHS trusts. [209790]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* This information is not held centrally. The appointment of chairs and non-executive directors to national health service trusts has been delegated to the NHS Appointments Commission. Sir William Wells, chair of the NHS Appointments Commission has been asked to write to my hon. Friend.

NHS University

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what arrangements he will make to ensure that there is no diminution in the quality of the training provided when the NHS university is replaced by the NHS institute for learning, skills and innovation. [209238]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service institute for learning, skills and innovation will integrate and strengthen the way we support people development, service improvement and technical innovation in the NHS. The changes will build on the learning achieved from the best of the NHS university's existing programmes.

The work of supporting the development of a quality assurance framework for learning in the NHS is undertaken by Skills for Health, the sector skills council for health. This work will continue unchanged.

Likewise, we remain committed to enhancing skills through the Skills Escalator and through mechanisms such as NHS learning accounts, national vocational qualifications (NVQs), adult literacy, numeracy and language skills (Skills for Life), with £180 million to be invested during the three years from April 2003.

We have further demonstrated our commitment to improving the learning opportunities for NHS staff through the appointment of Professor Bob Fryer as the new national director for widening participation in learning.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff have participated in NHS university courses since its inception, broken down by subject. [209240]

Mr. Hutton: The number of staff who have participated in NHS university courses for the period 16 July 2003 to 11 January 2005 is shown in the table.

Course	*Number of participants*
Advanced Communications in Cancer Care	42
Aggregate Root Cause Analysis (RCA)	57
Child Protection pilot	194
Child Protection roll-out	50
Cleaning Infection Control	562
Clinical Microsystems	45
Customer Care	213
Customer Care Tutor Orientation	273
Disability Awareness Training	141
Estates Upskilling	6
First Contact Care	208
Health Informatics and Assessment Tool	732
Incident Decision Tree (IDT)	6,475
Introduction to Patient Safety e-learning	5,971
Introduction to Today's NHS	4,728
Introduction to Today's NHS Briefings	763
Managing Health and Social Care	1,200
Managing Patient Complaints	56
Managing Patient Complaints Tutor Orientation	8
Modernising Medical Careers	17
Personal Development Review	85
Personal Development Review Tutor Orientation	340
Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Foundation Training	3,326
Root Cause Analysis (RCA) Networked Training	5,153
Secure (Prison Health)	2,000
Seven Steps to Patient Safety	3,018
Statutory Mandatory Skills	441
Ufi/Learn Direct NHS hubs	3,669
Working for the NHS	946
Working for the NHS Tutor Orientation	289
Grand total	41,008

Nursing

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what incentives are in place to discourage people from leaving the nursing profession. [209419]

Mr. Hutton: There are more qualified nurses working in the national health service than ever before, as at March 2004 there were 396,359 NHS nurses, an increase of 77,500 since 1997.

There are a wide range of programmes in place to support nurses in the NHS to fulfil their aspirations, to drive forward new ways of working, and to value and respect their contribution to improving patient care. These include a new pay system; the knowledge and skills framework; the NHS child care strategy and "Improving Working Lives".

"Agenda for Change", the new pay system for non-medical staff in the NHS, provides a unique opportunity for improved career opportunities for NHS staff working across the range of clinical and managerial roles, which in turn will support service redesign and a modernised work force able to deliver a 21st century service for patients. An integral part of "Agenda for Change" is the NHS knowledge and skills framework, which defines and describes the knowledge and skills which individuals need to apply in their work in order to deliver quality services. It provides a single, consistent, comprehensive and explicit framework on which to base the review and career development of all staff.

The NHS child care strategy is part of the wider "Improving Working Lives" programme, which supports staff, provides a healthy and safe working environment and helps them through a range of flexible working and flexing retirement opportunities manage a healthy work/life balance.

Orthodontists (North-east)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects vacancies for orthodontists at Sunderland Royal Hospital to be filled; and how long the positions have remained vacant. [210141]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the chair of City Hospitals Sunderland National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Mr. David Graham, chair, informing him of my hon. Friend's inquiry.

Ovarian Cancer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial resources have been made available for research into ovarian cancer in the last five years. [207088]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The NHS Plan announced that the Department would provide an additional £20 million per year to establish a national cancer research network. The National Cancer Research Network (NCRN) and the National Translational Cancer Research Network were established as a result. The NCRN is currently providing NHS infrastructural support for 11 trials in ovarian cancer.

The research costs of these trials are being met by public, private and charity sector funders. The Medical Research Council (MRC) is meeting some or all of the costs of five, including the £8.7 million United Kingdom collaborative trial of ovarian cancer screening.

The Department funds research to support policy and to provide the evidence needed to underpin quality, improvement, and service development in the NHS. Research on identifying potentially significant diagnostic factors for ovarian cancer in primary care was commissioned in 2001 and £130,000 has been spent on it.

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by NHS organisations. Details of individual projects, including more than sixty ovarian cancer research studies, can be found on the national research register at www.dh.gov.uk/research.

Paddington Basin Health Campus

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to announce the selection of a private finance initiative partner for the Paddington Basin Health Campus project; and which companies are under consideration by his Department for this role. [209357]

Mr. Hutton: The outline business case submitted to the Department in December 2004 assumes the appointment of a private finance initiative partner (PFI) to develop the Paddington Health Campus in April 2008 following financial close in a PFI procurement. No companies are being considered by the trusts.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208936]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has a total of 381 car parking spaces available on its administrative estate for which it is responsible, over half of which are in Leeds.

Patient to Nurse Ratios

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the *(a)* minimum and *(b)* maximum patient to nurse ratios are; and in which health authorities they apply; [209416]

(2) what the recommended minimum nurse to patient ratio is in the NHS; [209417]

(3) what the average patient to nurse ratio was in *(a)* the London borough of Havering, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England for each of the last seven years. [209418]

Mr. Hutton: Information is not collected on nurse to patient ratios. The table shows the nurse to population ratios for London and England, and the minimum and maximum ratios by strategic health authority.

There is no recommended minimum nurse to patient ratio, it is for national health service organisations to determine their own work force mix.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff per 1,000 population by strategic health authority as at 30 September 2003

		Nurses per 1,000 population
	England	7.31
Q03	Essex	5.30
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	5.38
Q18	Kent and Medway	5.67
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	5.72
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	6.00
Q28	West Midlands South	6.32
Q24	Trent	6.49
Q22	Dorset and Somerset	6.58
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire	6.59
Q16	Thames Valley	6.62
Q19	Surrey and Sussex	6.80
Q21	South West Peninsula	6.84
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	6.99
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	7.18
Q08	South West London	7.39
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	7.41
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	7.44
Q06	North East London	7.61
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	7.68
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country	8.07
Q14	Greater Manchester	8.17
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside	8.38
Q23	South Yorkshire	8.47
Q12	West Yorkshire	8.55
Q04	North West London	8.57
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	8.94
Q07	South East London	9.21
Q05	North Central London	10.29

Source:

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff and population figures in the London Government office region by strategic health authority as at 30 September in each specified year

		1997			1998		
		Population	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*	*Population*	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*
England total		48,523,000	300,467	6.1923	48,657,508	304,563	6.2593
London total		7,014,838	62,145	8.8591	7,065,497	50,309	7.1204
North Central London	Q05	1,149,942	13,321	11.5841	1,155,673	10,659	9.2232
North East London	Q06	1,452,105	11,592	7.9829	1,466,201	8,677	5.9180
North West London	Q04	1,688,315	13,989	8.2858	1,702,126	12,238	7.1898
South East London	Q07	1,462,845	12,553	8.5812	1,473,553	11,006	7.4690
South West London	Q08	1,261,631	10,690	8.4732	1,267,944	7,729	6.0957

		1999			2000		
		Population	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*	*Population*	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*
England total		48,836,466	310,142	6.3506	48,997,263	316,752	6.4647
London total		7,153,912	51,849	7.2476	7,236,712	51,773	7.1542
North Central London	Q05	1,170,479	10,916	9.3261	1,184,723	10,931	9.2266
North East London	Q06	1,487,043	8,647	5.8149	1,503,189	8,302	5.5229
North West London	Q04	1,727,374	13,009	7.5311	1,754,603	12,697	7.2364
South East London	Q07	1,489,508	10,493	7.0446	1,503,332	11,079	7.3696
South West London	Q08	1,279,508	8,784	6.8651	1,290,865	8,764	6.7892

		2001			2002		
		Population	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*	*Population*	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*
England total		49,181,339	330,535	6.7207	49,536,567	346,537	6.9956
London total		7,322,403	55,298	7.5519	7,371,239	59,220	8.0339
North Central London	Q05	1,199,952	11,660	9.7171	1,213,768	11,866	9.7762
North East London	Q06	1,519,385	9,050	5.9564	1,527,794	9,399	6.1520
North West London	Q04	1,783,434	14,525	8.1444	1,806,532	16,426	9.0926
South East London	Q07	1,516,855	11,533	7.6032	1,515,226	12,817	8.4588
South West London	Q08	1,302,777	8,530	6.5476	1,307,919	8,712	6.6610

		2003		
		Population	*Nursing staff headcount*	*Per 1,000 population*
England total		49,855,740	364,692	7.3149
London total		7,387,868	64,568	8.7397
North Central London	Q05	1,220,221	12,631	10.3514
North East London	Q06	1,530,792	11,646	7.6078
North West London	Q04	1,814,671	16,682	9.1929
South East London	Q07	1,511,793	13,930	9.2142
South West London	Q08	1,310,391	9,679	7.3863

Note:

Population numbers are Office for National Statistics estimates.

Source:

Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Police Cells

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a police cell is deemed to be a place of safety for individuals with mental illness; and if he will make a statement. [208738]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In certain circumstances, people who are believed to be suffering from mental disorder may be removed to a place of safety under Part 10 of the Mental Health Act 1983. The Act defines a place of safety for these purposes as including a police station. The identification of a preferred place of safety is a matter for local agreement, but the Mental Health Act Code of Practice states that, as a general rule, it is preferable for a person thought to be suffering from mental disorder to be detained in a hospital rather than a police station.

Primary Care Trusts

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has given to primary care trusts on providing health services for prisons; and what resources have been provided for this purpose. [209656]

Dr. Ladyman: On 1 April 2003, funding responsibility for health services in the publicly run prisons in England was transferred from the Home Office to the Department. From 1 April 2004, at the beginning of a staged process, 18 national health service primary care trusts (PCTs) assumed commissioning responsibility for health services in 34 prisons. By April 2006, that commissioning responsibility will be fully devolved to PCTs and, in some cases, the PCT will also be the health care provider. Prisons and their NHS partners are now expected to work together to determine how best to meet prisoners' health needs. The Government are committing significant additional resources to facilitate the transfer of commissioning responsibility to the NHS. Revenue investment will have risen by over £40 million a year by 2005–06, an increase of more than a third over the 2002–03 baseline. The Prison Service is investing around £20 million a year over the same period to rebuild and refurbish prison health care facilities.

Policy development advice and support is available from the central prison health team and also the regional prison health leads, whose roles will become integrated in strategic health authorities after 2006. Additionally, there is a learning network, facilitated by the university of Birmingham, where health care staff and PCT commissioners are encouraged to share good practice and participate in learning sets and themed workshops. National and local guidance documents are available on the internet and distributed through local channels.

Prostate Cancer

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what his Department's publicity budget for prostate cancer awareness is in the current year; what his Department's expenditure on prostate cancer awareness was in each of the last six years; and if he will make a statement; [207903]

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps his Department is taking to increase public awareness of *(a)* detection, *(b)* diagnosis and *(c)* treatment of prostate cancer; [208408]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to increase clinical knowledge of prostate cancer amongst *(a)* general practitioners and *(b)* other health professionals; [208409]

(3) what progress has been made in *(a)* detection and *(b)* treatment of prostate cancer since 1997; [208411]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national health service prostate cancer programme was launched in September 2000 and set out the Government's commitment to improve early detection of prostate cancer, to improve treatment and care for prostate cancer patients and to enhance research into prostate cancer. Since the launch, significant progress has been made.

The prostate cancer risk management programme (PCRMP) has been set up to ensure that all men considering a test for prostate cancer are given information on the benefits, limitations and risks associated with having a prostate specific antigen (PSA) test.

We have issued clinical best practice so that PSA testing is performed to an explicit quality standard and that there is a systematic and standardised follow-up for those men with a high PSA level.

Raising public awareness of prostate cancer is one of the key challenges for the future. We want men to know what their prostate is, what is does and what can go wrong with it. However, we have to raise public awareness in a responsible way so as not to cause undue anxiety and worry.

Thanks to the work of the prostate cancer advisory group we now have, for the first time, a definitive set of key messages for the general public, which include prostate cancer and in such a way as not to cause unnecessary anxiety.

The key messages have been agreed by 20 organisations, including charities, patient groups and professional bodies, as well as the Department and can be fed into existing and future communications vehicles or as stand alone messages.

We have provided funding for the following organisations to increase public awareness of prostate cancer:

In 2003–04 we provided £30,000 to the Men's Health Forum to help fund its publication, the Men and Cancer manual.

We have provided £135,000 to the Prostate Cancer Charity to increase available information about prostate cancer.

We are providing £105,000 to the Prostate Cancer Charity to improve awareness of the risks and symptoms of prostate cancer in African and Afro-Caribbean men in Britain.

We are working with the voluntary sector to develop a national prostate cancer website and have provided £100,000 of funding. It is expected that the website will be launched this summer.

We are also working to both increase and improve clinical knowledge of prostate cancer. In April 2000, we published referral guidelines for suspected cancer to help general practitioners identify those patients who are most likely to have cancer and who therefore require urgent assessment by a specialist. The guidelines included a section on prostate cancer.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently reviewing this guidance and an update is due to be published in 2005.

The PCRMP has produced a booklet, called, The PSA test and prostate cancer: Information for primary care. This booklet provides GPs with an easy reference source on prostate cancer, from risk factors to treatment. The booklet was produced after consultation with GPs, primary care cancer leads and an expert advisory group.

In September 2002, NICE published guidance on urological cancers, including prostate cancer. This guidance covers all aspects of cancer care for urological cancer patients and is aimed at helping all of those involved in planning, commissioning, organising and providing cancer services to ensure high quality services.

As well as this guidance NICE is developing guidelines for the clinical management of prostate cancer and an overview of brachytherapy as an interventional procedure for prostate cancer. NICE is also appraising two prostate cancer drugs, Docetaxel and Atrasentan.

The cancer services collaborative has been working with urology teams across the country to improve access to care and to streamline the delivery of care.

We have also increased twenty-fold research funding for prostate cancer since 1999–2000; from £200,000 to £4.2million for 2003–04. This level of funding will be maintained, subject to the quality of research proposals.

Smoking

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list the organisations and individuals from whom representations on the displacement of smoking from public places to homes as a result of legislation restricting smoking in public places were received during the preparation of the Public Health White Paper; [201951]

(2) what research his Department has collated on the possible displacement of smoking from public places to homes, as a result of legislation restricting smoking in public places; [201952]

(3) what research he has commissioned on the possible displacement of smoking from public places and workplaces as a result of legislation restricting smoking in such places; [201982]

(4) what assessment has been made of the effect of exempting from restrictions on smoking in public places/pubs which do not serve prepared food would have on displacing smoking from public places to homes. [201995]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The proposals for legislation set out in the White Paper "Choosing Health—Making Healthy choices easier" to shift the balance in favour of smoke-free enclosed public places and workplaces were based on the scientific evidence of harm from second hand smoke and the views from the public. In preparation of the proposals, we took full account of the latest scientific and medical evidence of the risk to health from exposure to second hand smoke, as set out in the report from the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health, which was published alongside the White Paper. Many of the studies covered look at the effects on non-smokers of living with smokers.

We took full account of the views of the public, as expressed in over 150,000 responses to the public consultation on public health, in preparing our proposals. While protecting the right of the majority to go out for a meal or a drink without damage, inconvenience or pollution from second hand smoke, the proposals also provide a degree of choice for the minority. We believe that this is a sensible solution that balances the protection of the majority with the personal freedom of the minority in England.

We have made an assessment of the impact that smoking in public places would have in a reduction in smoking prevalence, which would thereby have a beneficial impact of reducing smoke at home. We will continue to act on the issue of second hand smoke in the home and have already taken action through the hard hitting campaign launched last year depicting the dangers of smoking around babies and children.

Social Workers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what provision for mental health training is included in the new degree course for social workers. [210361]

Dr. Ladyman: The social work degree is a generic degree based on a prescribed curriculum. Training providers must ensure that students undertake specific learning in a number of key areas. As part of their learning and assessment, students receive training on mental health matters in the human growth and development element of their degree. This forms a key element of the prescribed curriculum, which is also based on the National Occupation Standards for Social Work, in England, developed by Topss England. Mental health matters are covered in some detail in these standards.

On qualification, there are opportunities for further training in specialist areas. As part of the reform of the social work education, the General Social Care Council is undertaking a review of the current framework for post-qualifying training for social work.

Trust Financial Shortfalls

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the likely financial shortfall of *(a)* NHS Plymouth Hospital Trust and *(b)* Plymouth Primary Care Trust at 31 March; and if he will make a statement. [209955]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with shifting the balance of power, strategic health authorities (SHAs) are responsible for the financial performance management of individual health organisations within their health economy.

The latest information published by the South West Peninsula SHA shows that the 2004–05 forecast outturn position for Plymouth Hospitals national health service trust is a deficit of £6.2 million. The 2004–05 forecast outturn position for Plymouth Primary Care Trust is that they will achieve financial balance.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources he plans to devote to information and education campaigns in relation to tuberculosis in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [200099]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department is currently funding a joint campaign with the charity, TB Alert, targeted at raising awareness of tuberculosis among health professions and the public. This media campaign will launch this spring and the Department will resource a continuing media campaign throughout 2005.

Waiting List Deaths

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many persons died while on a waiting list for *(a)* an in-patient and *(b)* an out-patient appointment in England in each of the last five years. [209915]

Mr. Hutton: This information is not collected centrally.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Abandoned Vehicles (Morecambe Bay)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* Lancaster city council and *(b)* South Lakeland district council have responsibility for the removal of abandoned vehicles on the sands of Morecambe Bay. [206083]

Keith Hill: Under Section 3(1) of the Refuse Disposal Amenity Act 1978, local authorities are under a duty to remove vehicles that are abandoned in their area on any land in the open air or on any other land forming part of a highway. However, under Section 3(3) of the same Act, local authorities are absolved of this duty regarding vehicles that are situated otherwise than on a carriageway if it appears to them that the cost of removing them to the nearest convenient carriageway would be unreasonably high.

Anti-social Behaviour Act

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he intends to publish guidance to local authorities on implementation of Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [210351]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue guidance for local authorities at the same time as the Regulations to bring Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 into force are laid before Parliament. We expect the complaints system to be fully operational early this year.

Consultation

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines he issues on periods appropriate for consultation on major documents; and if he will make a statement. [210414]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister follows the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation which can be found at: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/docs/consultation/pdf/code.pdf

Council Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total income in capital receipts was from the sale of council housing under the right-to-buy in each year between 1997–98 and 2002–03, broken down by Government Office region. [209697]

Keith Hill: Figures for the estimated right-to-buy receipts (based on the selling price net of discount) for 1997–98 to 2002–03 by Government Office region are tabled as follows:

Right-to-buy receipts (£ million)

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
North East	56.8	48.0	69.7	76.9	65.3	109.8
North West	74.0	69.4	89.6	105.0	120.1	168.3
Yorkshire and Humber	70.9	75.8	96.1	102.3	145.0	225.3
East Midlands	62.4	64.3	92.3	100.0	120.4	173.6
West Midlands	104.4	101.4	144.3	144.3	160.4	236.3
East	130.1	119.2	203.2	190.4	187.8	247.8
London	192.5	233.0	380.3	455.5	509.1	720.3
South East	128.8	125.8	212.4	169.7	172.5	241.6
South West	69.8	70.4	86.9	86.9	87.2	120.7
England	889.8	907.4	1,374.8	1,430.8	1,567.6	2,243.6

Council Tax (Bexley)

Derek Conway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the discussions between his Department and Bexley borough council on the level of council tax increases. [210408]

Mr. Raynsford: I wrote to all local authority Leaders on 9 December making it clear that the Government expect all local authorities to budget prudently in 2005–06 and that the average council tax increase in England should be less than 5 per cent. I also said that the Government are prepared to take tougher capping action than we did in 2004–05 to deal with excessive budgets.

The Leader of Bexley borough council will have received this letter along with all other authorities.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205588]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. Since that date the following has been spent on the provision and maintenance of indoor and outdoor plants. The figures include VAT.

	The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	*Government Office Network*
May 2002 to March 2003		
(a) Indoor hired and maintained	16,300	38,100
(b) Indoor bought	6,600	0
(c) Outdoor hired and maintained	0	200
(d) Outdoor bought	20	0
April 2003 to March 2004		
(a) Indoor hired and maintained	17,800	32,200
(b) Indoor bought	80	22,700
(c) Outdoor hired and maintained	0	766
(d) Outdoor bought	0	1,800
April to November 2004		
(a) Indoor hired and maintained	15,200	32,800
(b) Indoor bought	4,000	20,000
(c) Outdoor hired and maintained	0	800
(d) Outdoor bought	0	300

All expenditure incurred in the purchase and procurement of these services and items has been made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

The information for agencies is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206448]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister came into existence from May 2002. The information listed in following table provides the expenditure related to litigation cases worked on in year by the Treasury Solicitor's Department on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

	Financial year		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05 April to December*
Number of litigation cases worked on in year by the Treasury Solicitor' s Department on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	385	412	343
Costs paid by the Office of the Deputy to the Treasury Solicitor's Department (£ million)	1.02	1.26	0.74

To provide a breakdown of expenditure exactly as requested would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208031]

Yvette Cooper: Information on regional distribution of staff is available in the Libraries of both Houses, and also at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2003_report/index.asp

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution.

Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2005.

Development Plans (South-West England)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the proposal by the South West Regional Assembly that up to 30,000 houses should be built on green belt land between Cheltenham and Gloucester. [210415]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware that a consultation exercise is currently being carried out in Gloucestershire, seeking views on technical work that has been undertaken on behalf of the Regional Assembly by a Steering Group led by the county council. We are also aware that the consultation document does not contain proposals but seeks views on this technical work and the possible implications of different levels of housing growth in the Gloucester and Cheltenham area. This work and the views of local people will help the Regional Assembly to prepare a draft Regional Spatial Strategy that will be submitted to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister at the end of this year.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what instructions he gave the South West Regional Assembly regarding the Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West; and if he will instruct the Assembly to extend the consultation period on its proposals for Gloucestershire to at least three months. [210417]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's policies on the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSSs) are set out in Planning Policy Statement 11, which was issued in 2004. Those policies must be taken into account by Regional Planning Bodies, including the South West Regional Assembly, in preparing their RSS. We have given no specific instructions to the South West Regional Assembly, separate from those policies. I understand that a consultation exercise is currently being carried out in Gloucestershire, seeking views on technical work that has been undertaken on behalf of the Regional Assembly by a Steering Group led by the County Council. The consultation period runs from 17 January to 18 February 2005. This is entirely a matter for the Regional Assembly and its local partners and it would be inappropriate for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to intervene.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost has been to *(a)* each of the six local district authorities in Gloucestershire in preparation of current local plans and *(b)* Gloucestershire county council in the preparation of its current Structure Plan. [210418]

Keith Hill: The Government do not monitor the costs incurred in preparing local and structure plans by individual authorities. The number of factors affecting the final cost of plan production will differ greatly between authorities, based upon for example, the development issues affecting the area, consultation processes, printing costs, number of representations received, length of inquiry, legal costs, and staff overheads.

Fire Service

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the availability of life insurance for firefighters. [206071]

Mr. Raynsford: The Fire Brigades Union have made representations to my right hon.. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister about life insurance cover in connection with terrorist incidents and was able to inform the General Secretary that assurance had been given by the Association of British Insurers that most life insurance policies have no terrorist exclusions.

Subsequently the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received correspondence from the President of Chief Fire Officers' Association and from the Fire Officers' Association. This is in addition to correspondence from a small number of fire and rescue services and five letters from MPs expressing the concerns of their constituents.

Flood Plains (Development)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what studies *(a)* the Government Office for the South West and *(b)* his Department has commissioned into the effect upon the flood-plain in Gloucestershire near Cheltenham and Gloucester of development near the flood-plain. [210416]

Keith Hill: The Environment Agency has the lead role in providing advice on flood issues, at a strategic level and in relation to planning applications. In October 2004 the Environment Agency published the new Flood Map and Flood Zones data, which covers the whole of England and provides information on the extent of flood risk areas and the location and implications of flood defence provisions.

The Government's policy on development in flood-plains, contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note 25, is to reduce the risks to people and the developed and natural environment from flooding and it looks to local planning authorities to ensure that flood risk is properly taken into account in the planning of developments to reduce the risk of flooding.

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to prohibit the use of domestic oil tanks and oil heating systems in flood plains and coastal areas which are at risk from flooding in respect of *(a)* new housing and *(b)* existing housing; and what representations he has received from the Environment Agency concerning this issue. [210355]

Phil Hope: There are currently no plans to prohibit the use of oil tanks and oil heating systems in areas which are at risk from flooding and, to date, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received no representations from the Environment Agency concerning this issue.

Housing

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will provide a breakdown of the Low Cost Home Ownership units planned for Southwark in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 Approved Development programme by *(a)* one-bed, *(b)* two-bed, *(c)* three-bed and *(d)* four-bed or more; [202970]

(2) if he will provide a breakdown of the Low Cost Home Ownership units planned for Southwark in the Housing Corporation's 2004–06 Approved Development Programme by *(a)* conventional shared ownership, *(b)* key worker shared ownership, *(c)* Homebuy and *(d)* other forms of low cost home ownership. [202971]

Keith Hill: A table with the breakdown of Low Cost Home Ownership by type and by bedroom numbers for 2004–06 for all London boroughs has been made available in the Library of the House.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total amount of capital receipts from shared owners staircasing up their equity share in 2003–04 was; and how many units were involved. [209709]

Keith Hill: In 2003–04 a total of £65.5 million was credited to the recycled capital grant fund (RCGF) in respect of shared owners staircasing up their equity share. This involved a total of 3,551 dwellings.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many and what proportion of *(a)* council tenants, *(b)* housing association tenants and *(c)* tenants in the private sector in Stoke-on-Trent receive housing benefit. [210858]

Keith Hill: A table with the percentage of housing association tenants for local authority areas in England has been made available in the Library of the House. Comparable data for local authority tenants and tenants in the private sector are not available centrally.

Leasehold Reform Act

Mr. Colman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to amend section 29 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 dealing with restrictive covenants. [208531]

Keith Hill: The Government have no current plans to amend section 29 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967.

Mr. Colman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will introduce an arbitration scheme for cases in which a freeholder disputes the level of premium charged by a local authority, exercising its legal right to do so, for a release under section 29 of the Leasehold Reform Act 1967 covenant. [208532]

Keith Hill: No.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* specific, *(b)* special and *(c)* non-ring-fenced grants that the Government has allocated to local authorities in 2004–05. [207921]

Mr. Raynsford: The following table lists all grants allocated to local authorities in England in 2004–05 within Aggregate External Finance (AEF) in addition to Revenue Support Grant, National Non-Domestic Rates and Police Grant. There are other grants outside AEF but these are not provided for an authority's core services and relate, in the main, to areas of funding which are passed on by local authorities, such as Mandatory Student Awards.

	Amount (£ million)	*Ring-fenced*
Grants made under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003:		
Excellence in Cities	260.6	No
Choice Protects	33.0	Yes
Adoption Support and Special Guardianship	23.0	Yes
Safeguarding Children	100.0	No
Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation	32.4	Yes
Change Fund	7.0	No
Waste Re-Cycling Challenge	90.0	Yes
Waste Targeted Grant	20.0	No
Fire Transitional Funding	28.3	Yes
Fire Pay Verification	0.8	Yes
Planning Delivery	130.0	No
Supporting People Administration	48.1	No
Rural Bus Subsidy	51.0	No
Rural Bus Challenge	20.0	Yes
Urban Bus Challenge	16.0	Yes
Homelessness Strategies	45.4	No
Private Finance Initiative	415.0	No
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	450.0	No
LPSA Reward Grant[1]	101.0	No

	Amount (£ million)	*Ring-fenced*
Grants made under other specific powers:		
Standards Fund	1306.8	Yes
Sure Start General Grant	461.0	Yes
Teachers' Pay Reform	825.6	Yes
Leadership Incentive	193.6	Yes
Education Action Zones	37.4	Yes
Transitional Support	118.0	Yes
School Standards	859.1	N/A
UASC Leaving Care	12.0	Yes
Carers Grant	125.0	No
Training Support	53.3	No
National Training Strategy	31.0	No
Preserved Rights	458.3	No
Treatment Foster Care	3.0	Yes
Children's Trusts	3.2	Yes
Regional Development Workers	1.0	Yes
Human Resources Development Strategy	23.9	No
Access and Systems Capacity	486.0	No
Children and Adolescent Mental Health	66.0	Yes
Young People's Substance Misuse Planning	4.5	Yes
Mental Health	133.0	Yes
AIDS Support	16.5	Yes
Delayed Discharge	100.0	No
Crime Fighting Fund	267.0	Yes
Rural Policing Fund	26.0	No
Neighbourhood Policing Fund	12.0	Yes
Occupational Health	4.7	No
Police Negotiating Board	48.0	Yes
DNA	50.0	Yes
Basic Command Units	48.0	Yes
London and South East Allowances	49.0	No
London Travel	3.0	No
Community Support Officers	39.0	Yes
Special Constables	6.6	Yes
Street Crime Initiative	25.0	Yes
Reform Deal	4.7	Yes
National Intelligence Model	3.7	Yes
Counter Terrorism	83.0	Yes
Airwave Communication Project	6.6	Yes
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit administration	331.7	No
Performance Standards Fund	70.0	No
Civil Defence	19.0	Yes
Probation Loan Charges	3.0	Yes
Neighbourhood Wardens	19.0	Yes
Supporting People	1807.0	Yes
Magistrates' Courts	371.9	No
Detrunking	33.3	No
Beacons	5.0	No
Community Cohesion Pathfinder	0.4	Yes
GLA General Grant	36.3	No

[1] LPSA Reward Grant—this is the maximum provision as specified in individual councils LPSAs, and "allocations" will depend on performance. This is the revenue element of the grant, the other £101 million being capital.

Minerals Planning Guidance No. 3

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received on the operation of Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3; and if he will make a statement. [210047]

Keith Hill: The Coal Producers Federation (COALPRO) has made representations to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3 "Coal mining and colliery spoil disposal". It suggested that the test of the circumstances within which it is appropriate to permit opencast coal applications in paragraph 8 of MPG3 has sometimes been misinterpreted and that this has contributed to the significant decrease in new planning permissions for open cast coal extraction in England in recent years. It also considered that policies in some draft Regional Planning Guidance and local planning documents prepared by Minerals Planning Authorities do not accord with that national guidance, for example by applying a double test of environmental acceptability and local community benefits whereas these are specified as alternatives in MPG3. On careful reading, the meaning of this paragraph should be clear, and at present there are no plans to review MPG3. However officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, together with those in the relevant Government Offices, will continue to examine and comment on regional and local planning documents to help ensure that these conform to national policy on this and other matters dealt with in MPG3.

Mobile Network (Code of Best Practice)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects his Department to complete the study of the effectiveness of the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development. [210696]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned the University of Reading and Arup to undertake a study to assess the impact that the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Network Development has had since its introduction. We expect their work to conclude at the end of March.

New Dimension Programme

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the management structure of the Department's New Dimension programme is; and if he will make a statement. [209718]

Mr. Raynsford: The New Dimension programme is managed in accordance with the Office of Central Government Commerce (OGC) guidelines. As required by OGC for programmes of this size and profile, the Senior Responsible Officer is a Grade 3 Civil Servant and I am the named responsible Minister. The New Dimension programme is part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Fire Resilience Programme, which is overseen at Director General (Grade 2) level.

New Dimension is part of the Government's overall civil contingencies programme. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently investing £188 million of resources in the fire and rescue service on mass decontamination equipment, urban search and rescue equipment and high volume water pumps. The programme is currently developing on budget, on time and to high quality standards.

Open Cast Coal Mines

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many open cast coal mining planning applications were made in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; how many approvals were granted *(a)* by local planning authorities and *(b)* on appeal in each of those years; and what tonnage was approved for extraction in each of those years. [210048]

Keith Hill: Figures for the years 1991–92 to 2000–01 are tabled. Figures for subsequent years are available only with respect to approvals on appeal or call-in and for the calendar year 2003.

	Number of applications made	*Approvals by local planning authorities*	*Approvals on appeal or call-in*	*Tonnage approved for extraction (Thousand)*
1991–92	59	31	9	5,812
1992–93	57	32	7	7,106
1993–94	56	23	6	7,217
1994–95	32	12	5	5,584
1995–96	40	24	0	2,717
1996–97	39	24	2	7,269
1997–98	27	14	0	2,103
1998–99	25	15	1	5,836
1999–00	12	4	1	1,384
2000–01	10	7	1	1,285
2001–02	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
2003	7	5	0	2,351
2004	n/a	n/a	0	n/a

n/a = Not applicable

Source:

1991–92 to 2000–01 figures are derived from "Opencast Coalmining Statistics" (a Planning Officers' Society Publication). Figures for the calendar year 2003 are derived from "Opencast Coal Mining Statistics" produced by the British Geological Survey.

Organic Waste Disposal

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the farming of worms in connection with the business of organic waste disposal is regarded as an agricultural activity for planning purposes; and if he will make a statement. [210357]

Keith Hill: Section 336 (1) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 defines "agriculture" as including, among a number of specific activities:

> "horticulture, dairy farming, the breeding and keeping of livestock (including any creature kept for the production of food, wool, skins or fur, or for the purpose of its use in the farming of land), the use of land as grazing land, market gardens and nursery grounds."

In the first instance it is for local planning authorities to determine the status, for planning purposes, of particular developments and activities.

It may ultimately fall to the courts to interpret and decide such matters.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207659]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. Complete data is not held on the number or cost of cable and satellite subscriptions held in 2002–03.

In 2003–04, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister had cable and satellite service in five of its buildings. Two of these were provided at no cost and three were base package satellite/cable services provided at a cost of £21,310 including VAT.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of ten Government Departments.

Police Funding

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to provide additional grant to *(a)* Hampshire police authority and *(b)* other police authorities who lost grant as a result of errors in calculating the 2001 population. [210979]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has always been clear that we would issue an Amending Report for the 2003–04 settlement to incorporate the revised 2001 population estimates. It is only fair that authorities should receive the correct amount of grant relative to the updated population estimates. Indeed, we consulted on options for the 2003–04 and 2004–05 Amending Reports during the previous summer.

However, it is not possible for authorities that receive less grant under the Amending Report than they did under the original Local Government Finance Report to reopen their budgets for 2003–04. For this reason we will pay, or recover, any changes in 2003–04 grant amounts during 2005–06; and we have proposed amending the floor damping scheme for 2005–06 to ensure that all authorities should receive at least the floor increase in their formula grant after paying back any money owed under the 2003–04 Amending Report.

Under the provisional 2005–06 settlement, Hampshire police authority will receive a year-on-year increase of 3.75 per cent. on a like-for-like basis net of the effects of the 2003–04 Amending Report.

PPG 3

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many representations he has received from *(a)* individual local authorities and *(b)* others concerning the delay in publishing the updated version of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3; and if he will make a statement; [210200]

(2) when he expects to publish the revised version of Planning Policy Guidance Note 3; and what the reasons are for the delay. [210202]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published in July 2003 two consultation updates to Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (PPG3) entitled 'Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing', and 'Supporting the Delivery of New Housing'.

In the 'Planning for Housing' statement made to the House on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 3WS, the publication of two updates to PPG3, entitled 'Supporting the Delivery of New Housing' and 'Planning for Sustainable Communities in Rural Area' was announced. These relate respectively to new policies on the re-use of unneeded employment land where it is needed and suitable for housing, and the provision of affordable housing in rural areas (the latter forming part of the consultation update 'Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing').

In the 'Planning for Mixed Communities' statement also made to the House on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1WS, the publication of a consultation update to PPG3, entitled 'Planning for Mixed Communities' was announced. It proposes a revised approach to planning for a mix of housing to that which was set out in 'Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability of Housing'. The consultation period for responses closes on 15 April 2005.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has considered the responses it received during the consultation period and has since held extensive discussions with key stakeholders, in particular on the approach to the mix of housing set out in 'Influencing the Size, Type and Affordability'. The 'Planning for Mixed Communities' statement explains why the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is re-consulting. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not received any representations concerning the delay in publishing the updated version of PPG3.

Regional Housing Boards

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the role of the regional housing boards is in relation to *(a)* social housing and *(b)* Travellers. [209706]

Keith Hill: The Boards were established as part of a dynamic and more strategic approach towards addressing housing and other associated problems. They recommend to Ministers how resources for housing capital investment is best targeted to address regional and national priorities, and to address the needs of all groups.

These recommendations are made on the back of Regional Housing Strategies, which the Boards produce, and which cover all tenures, including social housing, and groups with different housing needs, including Travellers. The resources are used to increase the supply of social housing, to ensure that existing social housing meets the decent homes standard, and to provide sites for Travellers.

Right to Buy

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent changes have been implemented to the *(a)* right-to-buy and *(b)* right to acquire regulations; and if he will make a statement. [209998]

Keith Hill: The Housing Act 2004, which received Royal Assent on 18 November 2004, makes a number of changes to the Right to Buy scheme set out in Part V of the Housing Act 1985. It:

> extends the initial qualification period from two years to five years for new tenants, although they will then qualify for the same amount of discount as under the current rules—i.e. after the five years, 35 per cent. for a house or 50 per cent. for a flat
>
> extends the period after sale during which landlords may require owners to repay some or all of their discount on early resale, from three years to five years
>
> makes it clear that landlords have discretion to waive repayment of discount, to address cases where repayment could involve genuine hardship (the Government will issue guidance on this)
>
> requires the amount of discount repaid to be a percentage of the resale value of the property (less the value of any improvements made by the owner since exercising their Right to Buy) rather than the current flat rate basis
>
> shortens from 12 months to three months the period after which a landlord may serve on a tenant a 'first notice to complete'
>
> allows landlords to suspend the Right to Buy for up to five years on dwellings scheduled for demolition, or to exempt such dwellings from the Right to Buy altogether if they are due to be demolished within two years
>
> requires tenants who agree to resell their homes to companies within the discount repayment period (a 'deferred resale agreement') to repay some or all of their Right to Buy discount
>
> requires owners who wish to resell properties within 10 years of their being sold under the Right to Buy to offer them back to a local social landlord (the local authority or a registered social landlord) at market value. Landlords have always been able to do this for properties in national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, and areas designated as 'rural' for this purpose, of which there are now 35. The Act extends this power to other areas. The Government will specify procedures and timescales in regulations, which will be laid before Parliament as soon as possible
>
> requires landlords to give their tenants information on the costs and responsibilities of home ownership. The Government will specify the matters on which information is to given in an order, which will be laid before Parliament as soon as possible
>
> enables landlords of secure tenants to seek an order suspending the right to buy for a specified period in respect of the tenancy on the grounds of anti-social behaviour
>
> ends the little-used Rent to Mortgage scheme from 18 July 2005 (eight months after Royal Assent)
>
> transfers jurisdiction over appeals by tenants denied the Right to Buy on the grounds that their homes are particularly suitable for occupation by elderly persons from the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, to residential property tribunals in England. This will take place on a date to be determined by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, which is likely to be in the spring of 2005.

All these changes except the last three came into effect on 18 January 2005. Mostly, they do not affect applications for the Right to Buy made before that date, apart from the following:

> the extended qualification period does not apply to existing tenants
>
> landlords have been given discretion to waive the repayment of discount in respect of disposals which take place after 18 January
>
> provisions relating to deferred resale agreements apply to any agreements made after 18 January
>
> information for tenants will be provided to all tenants regardless of whether an application has been made for the Right to Buy or not; and
>
> the transfer of jurisdiction for elderly exclusion appeals will be dependent upon the date of the appeal rather than the date of the Right to Buy application.

The changes automatically apply to the Preserved Right to Buy (available to tenants transferred with their homes from local authorities to registered social landlords, mainly under large-scale voluntary transfer arrangements) (see section 171C of the Housing Act 1985), also and, with the exception of the last two, to the Right to Acquire scheme (see section 17 of the Housing Act 1996). Provision has to be made to continue orders suspending the Right to Buy because of antisocial behaviour in cases where the tenant ceases to be a secure tenant, but has a Preserved Right to Buy or the Right to Acquire, so that their right to purchase their home is still suspended.

The Preserved Right to Buy regulations and the Right to Acquire regulations will be replaced with new regulations which reflect these changes. These will be made and laid before Parliament as soon as possible.

Social Housing

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many units of affordable housing for *(a)* rent and *(b)* sale were built with funding generated by recycled capital grant in 2003–04; and how many existing social housing units were refurbished with recycled capital grant funding. [209708]

Keith Hill: In 2003–04, 464 homes for rent, 436 homes for sale and 1,769 refurbished dwellings of Registered Social Landlords (RSL) stock were provided through recycled capital grant fund (RCGF).

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much recycled capital grant was spent by registered social landlords to fund investment in refurbishment to bring existing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard in each year since 1997; [209710]

(2) if he will make a statement on the use of recycled capital grant by registered social landlords to fund investment in bringing existing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard rather than building new affordable housing. [209711]

Keith Hill: Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) can spend or commit recycled capital grant to projects that would be eligible for Social Housing Grant (SHG) within three years of the receipts being received or repay the grant to the Housing Corporation. For example, the recycled grant can be used to fund new dwellings and major repairs.

The Housing Corporation collects data on the extent of re-improvements and major repairs to RSL stock funded through the Recycled Capital Grant Fund (RCGF). The following table shows the total from the RCGF used in respect of re-improvements and major repairs to RSL stock between 1997–98 and 2003–04.

Total RCGF withdrawals for re-improvements and major repairs

	£ million
1997–98	0.000
1998–99	0.372
1999–2000	1.888
2000–01	16.575
2001–02	25.100
2002–03	30.818
2003–04	35.232
Total	109.985

Supporting People Programme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what formula was used for the outline allocation for the 2005–06 Supporting People programme; and if he will make a statement. [210302]

Yvette Cooper: Supporting People grant allocations in 2005–06 have been informed by the use of a needs based distribution formula which aims to ensure that funding better reflects relative need.

The new Supporting People distribution formula was specifically developed for the Supporting People programme and takes into account levels of deprivation, population and social economic factors within an authority.

Detailed information on the formula and its use is available on the Supporting People web site at: http://www.spkweb.org.uk/Subjects/Finance/Distribution_formula/

Use Class Orders

Jim Knight: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans *(a)* to finalise and *(b)* to publish changes to the Use Class Orders for Use Class 'A'. [210894]

Keith Hill: The amendments to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (the UCO) will take the form of two statutory instruments, one amending the UCO itself; the other amending the General Permitted Development Order. The statutory instruments have been finalised and will be published very shortly.

Voting Rights (Foreign Nationals)

Mr. Heald: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the UK residency requirements are to vote in local elections; and if he will make a statement on the eligibility of *(a)* citizens from the European Union, who are not UK or Irish citizens and *(b)* non-EU migrants with a right to remain, to vote in local elections in the UK. [210347]

Mr. Raynsford: Under Section 4(3) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (the 1983 Act) a person is entitled to be registered in the register of local government electors for any electoral area if on the relevant date he is resident in the area and satisfies other criteria on legal capacity, age and citizenship. Registration, along with the satisfaction of other criteria, brings with it the right to vote in local elections in that area.

(a) Such citizens of the European Union member states resident in the UK have been eligible to register and to vote in local government elections in the UK since 1996. This is as a result of the UK Government applying the European Council Directive 94/80/EC which allows EU nationals to vote and stand in local government elections of the member states they are resident in.

(b) Non-EU migrants who have a right to remain on the UK are not eligible to register and vote in UK local government elections, unless they are also qualifying Commonwealth citizens.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 25 January 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's priorities for the Agriculture and Fisheries Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [209551]

Mr. Bradshaw: The overall Council Agenda for 2004–06 is set out in the Multi-Annual Strategic Programme and the UK-Luxembourg Annual Operating Programme (AOP) for 2005, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The agenda for the UK Presidency will be determined, to a large extent, by the agenda we inherit from the Luxembourg Presidency and their progress on the dossiers identified in the Multi-Annual Strategic Programme and the Annual Operating Programme.

Consistent with the Government's priorities of promoting better regulation, sustainable development and economic reform in the EU, the key priorities in the agriculture sector in 2005 will be: to contribute to progress of the WTO development round, particularly through reform of the sugar sector; and make progress on the Rural Development regulation and the regulation on CAP financing, if these have not been concluded beforehand.

The Council is also likely to be dealing with dossiers on organic farming, fruit and vegetables, flax and hemp, wine, avian influenza, aquaculture health, welfare of broiler hens, BSE, animal by-products, forest law enforcement, fisheries conservation, third country fisheries agreements, simplification of fisheries legislation, improvements to fisheries control and inspection, the European Fisheries Fund and the setting of total allowable catches and quotas for the fishing industry in 2006.

Animal Rights Activists

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the safety from animal rights activists of agricultural landowners who have their details published on the Department's website when applying for a temporary closure of right to roam land during the shooting season. [210254]

Alun Michael: Personal details of applicants are not published on the Countryside Agency's website.

Shooting often proceeds without difficulty on access land without any formal restriction being put in place. Where an application is made for this or any other reason and a restriction is granted, the location and nature of the restriction and the reason for it appears on the Countryside Agency's www.openaccess.gov.uk website, so that members of the public wishing to check in advance about the possible existence of restrictions over an area of access land are able to do so.

The land manager has the further option to post local notices drawing attention to the restriction. A model site notice is issued with the direction imposing the restriction—but the decision as to whether to post the notice lies with the land manager.

If animal rights activists or others set out to disrupt lawful activities on access land or to intimidate those taking parts in shoots, Part V of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 provides clear scope for immediate action by the police.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the reasons are for her assessment that the UK would not be able to achieve the Government's original target of a 20 per cent. carbon dioxide reduction by 2010; and if she will make a statement. [211026]

Mr. Morley: While the projections published by DTI in November 2004 confirmed that, on the basis of existing policy measures, we were on track to go well beyond our Kyoto Protocol commitment, they also showed that we were only likely to achieve a 14 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

The shortfall is because projected emissions were higher than previous estimates due mainly to lower nuclear generation, higher electricity demand and higher coal generation and because the measures to reduce emissions were in aggregate expected to deliver less than originally anticipated. The current review of the UK's Climate Change Programme will consider what additional measures are needed to close the gap.

A copy of the DTI exercise to update energy and emissions projections is at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/projections.pdf

A copy of the addendum to the November report is at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the reasoning and methodology the Government employed in determining that a UK target for carbon dioxide reduction of 20 per cent. was achievable. [211027]

Mr. Morley: The UK's 3rd National Communication under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) sets out the reasoning and methodology employed by the Government in determining that a UK target for carbon dioxide reduction of 20 per cent. was achievable.

A copy is available on the Defra website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/3nc/default.htm

Chicken Welfare

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on (i) the effects on the welfare of hens of enriched battery cages and (ii) the economic effects of switching to alternative systems; and if she will make a statement. [210201]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra research into the welfare aspects of enriched cages is on-going. Details of current and past projects and reports can be found on the Defra website.

A Regulatory Impact Assessment was prepared during implementation of Council Directive 99/74/EC concerning the welfare of laying hens. To help formulate our thinking for the next review of the Directive, we will be taking into account the latest scientific and veterinary information on the different systems of laying hens production as well as environmental, political, social and economic factors.

Coral Reefs

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the state of the UK's coral reefs; and what future changes she expects to see due to climate change. [209279]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The UK has a small number of known cold-water coral reefs. The best studied of these is the Darwin Mounds some 150 km off the north-west coast of Scotland. When last surveyed in 2000, there was evidence of damage from bottom trawling. The UK sought, and was granted in 2003, emergency European Commission measures to restrict this type of fishing and so avoid further damage to the reef. The emergency measures were made permanent in 2004. It is hoped that surveys in 2005 will enable the condition of other possible reefs to be checked.

It is not certain what the full effects of global warming will be on the seas of the UK although it seems unlikely that warming of the seas will be great enough to affect cold-water corals in the short to medium future. Deep-water reefs are less likely to be affected.

The rise in CO_2 in the atmosphere is likely to cause a rise in acidity of surface waters, and affect the amount of calcium carbonate used by coral reefs for growth in shallow waters. How these predicted effects in shallower waters will affect deeper waters is not known, but any decreases in amounts of available calcium carbonate will not be beneficial to coral reefs.

Cormorants

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to what level the *(a)* UK and *(b)* English population of the cormorant would need to fall (i) in the breeding season and (ii) in winter for the Government to decide that it was no longer meeting its obligations for this species under the EU Birds Directive. [209811]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government's obligation under the Birds Directive is to ensure that measures taken under the directive do not worsen the initial status of the species protected. The directive was made in 1979 and although no accurate figures for wintering or breeding cormorant numbers are available for this date, it is generally accepted from monitoring of trends that wintering numbers in Britain have increased around four-fold since that date. These are our legal obligations. However, we have no intention of allowing the cormorant population to be reduced to anything approaching this level and the current policy, which aims to resolve cormorant/fishery conflicts at problem sites, will balance the interests of fisheries with the sustainable conservation status of the cormorant.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the quantity of *(a)* unapproved and *(b)* experimental GM material entering (i) animal feed and (ii) food intended for human consumption. [210879]

Mr. Morley: Importers and suppliers of food and feed have the responsibility for ensuring that only GM material approved under relevant EU legislation are imported into the EU and supplied through the food and feed chain. Our information is that importers and suppliers take these responsibilities seriously and that the quantity (if any) of unapproved GM material in the food and feed supply chain will be very low.

In the UK release of experimental GM material is closely controlled and strict precautions taken to prevent it from entering the food or feed chain.

Greyhound Licensing

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will require British Greyhound Racing Board members' *(a)* kennels and *(b)* tracks to be licensed by local authorities; and if she will make a statement. [210411]

Mr. Bradshaw: Under the proposed Animal Welfare Bill, the Secretary of State will be able to introduce secondary legislation regulating certain activities, and the welfare of racing greyhounds is a possible area for regulation. No decisions have yet been taken as to the level of regulation that should apply. Dogs in the care of man, which includes racing greyhounds, would also be protected by the welfare and cruelty provisions in the Bill.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the establishment of central-local partnerships in relation to antisocial behaviour; and what their *(a)* terms of reference and *(b)* membership will be. [210758]

Yvette Cooper: The last Central Local Partnership (CLP) meeting agreed to set up a CLP sub-group on Crime. Antisocial behaviour issues could be covered under this new sub-group. Terms of Reference and membership are yet to be decided.

Building Regulations

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the potential to achieve the objectives of *(a)* lower fuel bills and *(b)* lower carbon emissions through amending Part L of the Building Regulations; and if he will make a statement. [210655]

Phil Hope: The most recent assessment is contained in the consultation document published last July by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. That document contains proposals to raise the standards in Part L this year in line with the commitments in the Energy White Paper. As normal, the proposals aim to achieve substantial improvements consistent with Better Regulation policy, cost-effectiveness, design flexibility and the avoidance of excessive technical risks.

Flood Risks

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to ban the use of oil tanks and oil heating systems in flood plains and coastal areas believed to be at risk from flooding in respect of *(a)* new housing and *(b)* existing housing; what representations he has received regarding this from the Environment Agency; and if he will make a statement. [210631]

Phil Hope: There are currently no plans to prohibit the use of oil tanks and oil heating systems in areas which are at risk from flooding and, to date, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received no representations from the Environment Agency concerning this issue.

Living Spaces Programme

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which projects in the Eddisbury constituency under the Living Spaces programme have *(a)* applied for funds, *(b)* been supported with funds, *(c)* been refused funds and *(d)* have applications pending that were submitted before the 21 July 2004 deadline. [210283]

Phil Hope: Five projects in the Eddisbury constituency have applied for funding from the Living Spaces programme. Four projects have been approved and awarded funding. They are:

The Nantwich Embankment Environmental Improvement Scheme project which has been awarded a grant of £40,000.

The Nursery Road Recreation Ground Revitalisation project which has been awarded a grant of £82,275.

The Comberbach Recreation Area project (phase 1) which has been awarded a grant of £25,000.

The Moulton Children's Playing Field Trust Improvements project which has been awarded a grant of £25,000.

The fifth group has had its initial application approved and has since worked up their plans with the help of a trained Living Spaces enabler. Once Living Spaces receives a final recommendation from the enabler a decision on funding will be taken. This project is:

The Comberbach Recreation Area project (phase 2) which has applied for a grant of £25,000.

To date, no applications from groups in the Eddisbury constituency have been refused funds from the Living Spaces programme.

New Build Standards (South Midlands)

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the Building Research Establishment standards of *(a)* EcoHomes and *(b)* BREAM will be applied in the construction of new homes in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-region as part of the sustainable communities plan; [210226]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to ensure that the proposed new housing in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-region has high standards of energy efficiency and thermal insulation. [210228]

Phil Hope: The Government are not in a position to impose mandatory environmental standards specific to housing in the Milton Keynes South Midlands sub-region as the boundaries of the growth areas do not have any legal status. Furthermore, to set such mandatory standards could potentially lead to perverse consequences, by providing a disincentive to development in the growth areas relative to other areas.

However, the Government are keen to promote the construction of sustainable and energy efficient housing in the growth areas and believes that local delivery vehicles (LDVs) have an important role to play in promoting all aspects of sustainable development. Draft guidance has been circulated to the LDVs in the newer growth areas which identifies achievement of high quality design and higher environmental performance as being among their main objectives.

More generally, the Government are keen to promote environmentally sustainable and energy efficient housing throughout the country. In line with the commitments made in the Energy White Paper and at the Better Building Conference work is in train on bringing the next major revision of the building regulations energy efficiency provisions into effect this year and to publish a Sustainable Buildings Code that will encourage energy efficiency standards above those in the regulations and address sustainability more widely. For publicly funded housing, the Housing Corporation is already recommending that social housing schemes should achieve an EcoHomes rating of "very good" from April 2005 with the "good" rating as an essential condition for a project to receive a grant.

Regional Government (North-west)

David Maclean: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will make a statement on the legal status of the unelected regional structures that have been established in the north-west region; [210197]

(2) what the legal status is of the North West regional chamber; and if he will make a statement. [210920]

Mr. Raynsford: The North West Regional Assembly is an unincorporated association designated by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister under section 8 of the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998 as the regional chamber for the North West Regional Development Agency. Further to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 the North West Regional Assembly has been designated by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister as the Regional Planning Body for the region.

The North West Regional Development Agency is a body corporate established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998.

Right to Buy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with *(a)* housing associations, *(b)* the Housing Corporation and *(c)* banks about the effects of a right to buy for housing association tenants on the *(a)* financial projections and *(b)* business plans of registered social landlords and their funders. [210625]

Keith Hill: There have been no such discussions about the extension of the right-to-buy for housing association tenants.

Telecommunications Masts

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many objections have been made to his Department by residents living within the Greater London area to the siting of mobile telephone masts within their borough; and if he will make a statement. [211053]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Switchover

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government intend to launch a public awareness campaign in advance of digital switchover; and if she will make a statement. [209606]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 19 January 2005]*: The responsibility for communicating the switchover process and ensuring that everyone gets all the right information well in advance will primarily be one for "Switchco", broadcasters and the supply chain. The Government will continue to take responsibility for communicating its switchover policy, and we have been running, since November, a campaign to help raise awareness of digital switchover through the mainstream media, which will continue until March.

National Lottery

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government funded the recent Henley Centre publication Has the National Lottery helped the UK. [211066]

Estelle Morris: The Government did not fund the recent Henley Centre publication. The research was commissioned and published by the Camelot group.

The report concludes that the National Lottery has produced significant social and economic benefits within the UK.

TV Licensing Enforcement Unit

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what mechanisms are in place to ensure that the TV Licensing Enforcement Unit does not pursue pensioners over the age of seventy-five years who are entitled to a free TV licence. [209652]

Mr. Caborn: People aged 75 or over are entitled to a free television licence but are not exempt from the television licensing requirements. However, the BBC has indicated that TV Licensing carries out extensive public awareness campaigns to inform over-75s of their entitlement, that inquiry letters sent to unlicensed addresses include information on the concession and that inquiry officers carrying out home visits are specifically trained to assist over-75s in applying for free licences.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers on behalf of the Public Accounts Commission in the last three years. [207833]

Mr. Alan Williams: The Public Accounts Commission already pursues a policy of maximum transparency and openness in its proceedings. It has achieved this both by meeting in public and by publishing a wide range of material about its activities, including regular reports to the House. I am not aware of any examples in the last three years of information which has been refused in response to a parliamentary question but which would be provided under the Freedom of Information Act.

TREASURY

Child Benefit (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of additional 16 to 19-year-olds in Hartlepool that will be entitled to child benefit if the Child Benefit Bill receives Royal Assent. [210646]

Dawn Primarolo: If the Child Benefit Bill receives Royal Assent it will enable the Government to extend child benefit to the families of unwaged trainees on Government Supported Training and the families of 19-year-olds in full-time education or training finishing a course.

In relation to the number of families who may gain from the extension of child benefit for unwaged trainees, there were approximately 4,750 young people aged 16–19 on unwaged Government Supported Training courses in Tees Valley Local Learning and Skills Council in 2003–04.

There is insufficient data to estimate the number of families who would gain from the extension of child benefit to over 19-year-olds finishing their courses.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206874]

Mr. Timms: The following provisions created criminal offences in primary legislation sponsored by HM Treasury in the 2002–03 and 2003–04 sessions:

Finance Act 2003

Section 17(5)—Being supplied with goods or services in contravention of paragraph 4(2) of Schedule 11 of the Value Added Tax Act 1994 (Power to require security and production of evidence).

Section 94—Delay or obstruction of officer inspecting premises.

Section 95—Fraudulent evasion of tax.

Schedule 13, paragraph 53—Falsification, concealment, destruction or disposal of documents.

Child Trust Funds Act 2004

Section 18—Disclosure of information held in exercise of child trust fund functions.

Finance Act 2004

Schedule 1, paragraph 5—Possession, sale etc. of unstamped containers containing liquor.

Schedule 1, paragraph 6—Use of premises for sale of liquor in or from unstamped containers.

Schedule 1, paragraph 7—Sale of liquor following conviction for offence under paragraph 6.

National Insurance Contributions and Statutory Payments Act 2004

Section 7—Falsification, concealment, destruction or disposal of documents delivered or made available under section 110ZA of the Social Security Administration Act 1992 (Class 1, 1A, 7B or 2 contributions: powers to call for documents etc).

Section 8—as for section 7 above, but in respect of Northern Ireland.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions; [206681]

(2) how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205866]

Mr. Timms: In respect of water costs for all years and electricity costs for the years up to 2002–03, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answers given by the then Financial Secretary (Ruth Kelly) to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 14 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 1134W. For the Treasury, the costs of electricity, gas, telephones (including mobile telephones) and television licences for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are given in the following table. It is not possible to disaggregate the cost of lighting from total electricity costs. Information in respect of the earlier years, and the cost of mobile telephones disaggregated from total telephone costs, could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

£000

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Electricity	288	260
Gas	3	4
Telephones, including mobile telephones	1,592	1,416
Television licences	0.2	0.2

European Communities Medium Term Financial Assistance

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what actions were funded in 2004 through European Communities' Medium Term Financial Assistance funds within the special reserve for borrowing and lending Activities. [207128]

Mr. Timms: In 2004, one action was carried out through the European Communities' Medium Term Financial Assistance funds: a loan disbursement of €10.0 million (£7.0 million[1]) to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Details of the borrowing and lending activities conducted by the European Communities are published every six months in reports from the Commission on guarantees covered by the general budget. The reports are deposited in the Library of the House.

[1] Converted at the average annual rate for 2003 of £1 = €1.4320

Illegal Drugs (Africa)

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the quantity of illegal drugs *(a)* produced in Africa and *(b)* exported from Africa to Europe or the UK in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [210061]

Dawn Primarolo: The detailed estimates requested are not held by this department and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The broad position is that drug production in Africa is limited to cannabis cultivation. There is no evidence of any significant production of heroin or cocaine.

Seizure patterns and intelligence indicate the increasing use of west Africa as a transit point for cocaine and heroin to Europe and the UK.

Income Policy

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what policies the Government are pursuing to increase household incomes in areas with the lowest household incomes. [210444]

Mr. Timms: Through the child and working tax credits and the pension credit the Government have significantly improved financial support for working age and pensioner households on low incomes. As a result of tax and benefit reforms since 1997, by April 2005:

families with children in the poorest fifth of the population will be, on average, £3,000 a year better off; and

the poorest 10 per cent. of pensioner households will be, on average, £2,170 a year better off

The Government have also invested over £1.6 billion since 1997 in neighbourhood renewal programmes for the most deprived areas of the country, and has introduced employment programmes providing additional support for jobseekers in the poorest areas.

Income Tax (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers in the Nottingham, North constituency have benefited from the lower 10 per cent. starting rate of income tax. [211006]

Dawn Primarolo: All income taxpayers benefit from the 10 per cent. starting rate. Estimates of the number of taxpayers in each constituency within the UK will be published as National Statistics on the Inland Revenue website in February 2005.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209222]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Details of cancelled engagements are not retained centrally.

National Minimum Wage (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have benefited from the national minimum wage in the Nottingham, North constituency. [211011]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 25 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people have benefited from the national minimum wage in Nottingham North Parliamentary Constituency. I am replying in his absence. (211011)

Estimates for the number of jobs paid below the minimum wage for Parliamentary Constituencies are not available. However, the Office for National Statistics calculates estimates of the number of jobs paid less than national minimum wage rates for the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions. A guide to measuring low pay and associated articles and data can be found on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 5837&Pos = l&ColRank = l&Rank = 272

Savings Gateway

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the Savings Gateway pilot. [210438]

Mr. Timms: The last of the initial pilot Saving Gateway accounts matured in November last year and the evaluation team at the Personal Finance Research Centre at Bristol University are in the final phases of collecting the data and interpreting the evidence for their final report to HM Treasury.

The interim evaluation, published on the HM Treasury website in October 2003, finds that matching can provide an important new dimension to Government support for saving. We will build upon this evidence-base in the new larger £15 million pilot which was announced in the 2004 pre-Budget report.

Tax Credits

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been made about the tax credits system in each financial year since its inception, *(a)* via hon. Members and *(b)* direct from constituents; how many cases have been referred by hon. Members to the Inland Revenue for investigation; and if he will make a statement. [209042]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* At the end of March 2004 6 million families were benefiting from tax credits and the Inland Revenue had received 32,000 written complaints in relation to tax credits. It is not possible to split this figure by those received via hon. Members and those received direct from constituents.

All complaints made to hon. Members are referred to the Inland Revenue for investigation.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the total expenditure on *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit was in each year that these schemes have been in operation; [210055]

(2) what proportion of the budget for *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit has been spent on administration in each year that each scheme has been in operation. [210058]

Dawn Primarolo: Child and working tax credits were introduced in April 2003.

For the year ended 31 March 2004, the total expenditure on these tax credits, and the costs of managing and paying them, appear on pages 103–4 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for that year.

This can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/pdfs/report2004.pdf.

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people were overpaid *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit during 2003–04; [210331]

(2) how many families received *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit recovery notices during 2003–04. [210332]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of tax credits overpayments, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

Overpayments of tax credits are established after the end of the tax year, when final income and circumstances for the previous year are known and the award can be finalised. Where an award of tax credits has ceased and there remains an overpayment to be recovered, the Inland Revenue issues claimants with a 'Notice to Pay'. A small number of these notices were issued to recover tax credits in 2003–04, where awards were terminated on the grounds of no entitlement. To the end of March 2004, around 3,000 had been issued.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the average amount of compensation for errors paid by the Inland Revenue to claimants of tax credits was between April 2003 and December 2004; [211022]

(2) how many of the compensation payments made for errors to tax credits claimants between April 2003 and December 2004, were for *(a)* £0-£25, *(b)* £25-£50,

(c) £50-£100, *(d)* £100-£150, *(e)* £150-£200, *(f)* £250-£300, *(g)* £300-£350, *(h)* £350-£400, *(i)* £400-£450 and *(j)* £450-£500. [211023]

Dawn Primarolo: The circumstances in which the Inland Revenue will make compensation payments to its customers are explained In the Department's Code of Practice 1 "Putting things right when we make mistakes" which is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of their mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes or delays.

For the average amount of compensation authorised by the Inland Revenue to claimants of tax credits in 2003–04 I refer my right hon. Friend to paragraph 2.15 in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General attached to the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004.

The average amount of compensation paid in the period 1 April to 31 December 2004 was £63.

The detailed information sought by the right hon. Gentleman relating to compensation payments for errors between April 2003 and December 2004 is available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when Mr. Fitzgerald and Ms Johnson of Rock Ferry, constituents of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, will receive their tax credits. [211034]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue wrote to my right hon. Friend's constituents on 24 January 2005.

Terrorism

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what instructions his Department has given concerning the closure by the Royal Bank of Scotland of bank accounts used by terrorists. [210753]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury has given no instructions to the Royal Bank of Scotland to close bank accounts used by terrorists.

From time to time the Bank of England, on HM Treasury's instructions, directs all UK financial institutions to freeze funds (not close accounts) belonging to an individual or entity listed by the UN Security Council, associated EC Regulations or domestic legislation on countering terrorist finance. All organisations and individuals whose assets have been frozen in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions, associated EC Regulations and domestic legislation are listed, by HM Treasury instruction, on the Bank of England's Financial Sanctions website.

VAT (Trade Union Subscriptions)

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether VAT is charged on trade union membership subscription. [211003]

Dawn Primarolo: VAT is not charged on trade union membership subscriptions.

"Trade union" in VAT legislation has the meaning assigned to it by section 1 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Correspondence

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she will reply to the letter from the honourable Member for the Isle of Wight dated 26 October 2004 concerning John Havies. [211021]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The hon. Gentleman's letter was received on 29 October, unfortunately, due to an administrative error, it was overlooked for which I apologise. It has now become apparent that the hon. Gentleman's concerns are the responsibility of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and his letter is being transferred to them with a request that they respond as soon as possible.

Home Workers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when she plans to publish the results of her consultation on changes to the law on the rights of home workers. [210209]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We aim to issue a Government response to the consultation on the Discussion Document on Employment Status in relation to Statutory Employment Rights this year. This review has been considering the position of diverse groups of working individuals, including the clergy, agency workers and home workers.

Internet Shopping

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of purchases made on the internet in 2004 where the goods *(a)* never arrived and *(b)* were of inferior standard to those advertised. [210011]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have no estimates of purchases made last year on the internet.

Consumers are protected by the Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 which stipulate that unless the parties have agreed otherwise, the supplier must deliver the goods within 30 days; and that if the goods are unavailable the consumer must be informed and reimbursed. Consumers purchasing goods over the value of £100 by credit card in the UK are protected by section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, if the seller fails to honour the contract consumers may claim costs from the credit card company.

Also, advertising material on websites must not be misleading and goods supplied must be as described and of satisfactory quality. Trading Standards or the Office of Fair Trading can, where appropriate, take action against suppliers breaching these requirements.

The Home Office launched a website to combat fraud over the internet. The 'e-tailing mini site' forms part of the Crime Reduction Website and includes information to help on-line consumers protect themselves from fraud.

Government is also involved in the development of Project Endurance, an initiative that will launch an internet security public awareness campaign in spring this year. The project is an alliance of public and private sector, which brings together a number of UK

Government Departments and law enforcement organisations with a number of high-profile private sector companies. This campaign is to be targeted at micro businesses and consumers, primarily aimed at helping these users gain confidence in using the internet.

We will continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of these many different initiatives.

Subsidiary Companies

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to ensure that United Kingdom registered companies apply operational standards in operating subsidiaries located abroad which are compatible with legislation on environmental and social protection that applies in the United Kingdom. [205898]

Ms Hewitt: UK companies that operate overseas are subject to the laws applicable in those countries which will take account of the particular circumstances and practices of each host country. We encourage companies to apply high standards of corporate behaviour by addressing their environmental and social impacts wherever they operate, including adhering to relevant internationally agreed norms and initiatives. In line with this, we promote the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which recommend standards of responsible business conduct for businesses operating in or from the 37 adhering countries and will be writing to the FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of these expectations. We have also set out our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice internationally in our draft international strategic framework on Corporate Social Responsibility.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Running Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the running costs of the Cabinet Office were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile phones and *(f)* televisions. [206667]

Mr. Miliband: It is not possible to provide information for all the Cabinet Office Estate for running costs since 1997 as these costs are not held centrally and are not separately identifiable on the Department's accounting system. It cannot therefore be readily retrieved without incurring disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Cars

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office which individuals other than Ministers have had the use of Government cars provided for ministerial use in each year since 2000. [210420]

Mr. Miliband *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its Chief Executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Social Justice

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what definition her Office uses of the term social justice in Cabinet Office documents. [204279]

Mr. Miliband: As far as I am aware the Cabinet Office has not used the term social justice in any of its documents.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Immigration (Appeals)

Mr. Malins: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average waiting time was for the determination of an application for permission to appeal to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, at the latest date for which figures are available. [210892]

Mr. Leslie: Latest provisional information taken from the IRIS database of the Immigration Appellate Authority indicates that applications for permission to appeal to the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, promulgated within the period 1 October 2004 to 31 December 2004, took an average time of 15.5 weeks to process from receipt to determination.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Council Tax

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the composition is of the monies being re-allocated from her Department to local authorities as part of the re-allocation from Government Departments to reduce the council tax in the next financial year. [207312]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In his pre-Budget report on 2 December the Chancellor announced a total of more than £600 million in additional revenue support grant and specific formula grant over and above Spending Review plans for 2005–06, including the £100 million children's safeguarding grant to local authorities. It also included a further £25 million from general underspends within my Department's programmes.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years in receipt of an education maintenance allowance there are in each educational institution in Tower Hamlets. [209647]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and been paid EMA is available at local authority level. As at 14 January 2005 1,898 young people in the Tower Hamlets local education authority area had received an EMA payment.

A table showing how many young people are receiving EMA in individual educational institutions in Tower Hamlets is as follows.

Region	*LLSC*	*LEA*	*URN*	*Institute name*	*Take up of EMA*
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100889	Out of School Provision PRU	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100965	Bow School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100966	Langdon Park Community School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100967	Morpeth School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100968	Mulberry School for Girls	327
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100969	Stepney Green School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100970	St. Paul's Way Community School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100971	Bethnal Green Technology College	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100972	Oaklands School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100973	Swanlea School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100974	George Green's School	117
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100975	Central Foundation Girls' School	190
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100976	The Blessed John Roche Roman Catholic School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100977	Sir John Cass Foundation and Redcoat Church of England Secondary School	163
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100978	Bishop Challoner RC Collegiate School	80
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100979	Raine's Foundation School	76
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100982	Madni Secondary Girls' School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100985	Harpley School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100986	Bowden House School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100987	Phoenix School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	100989	Beatrice Tate School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	130418	Tower Hamlets College	918
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	131388	Jamiatul Ummah School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	131598	Ian Mikardo School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	131745	Madrasah-E-Darul Qirat Majidiah School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	132797	London Islamic School/Madrasah	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	133289	Bishop Challoner Collegiate Boys' School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	133307	Mazahirul Uloom School	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	133813	Queen Mary University of London	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	134154	Courtauld Institute of Art	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	134810	London East Academy	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	NSI043	Ebrahim Community College	25
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	NSI072	Lifelong Learning Service (Tower Hamlets)	2
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	NSI110	Local Labour in Construction	0
London	London East	Tower Hamlets	NSI111	Robin Hood Training Centre	0
					1,898

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to continue payment of education maintenance allowance to juveniles in custody aged 16 years and over. [210498]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The payment of EMA to young people in detention was trialled in some pilot areas including Stoke-on-Trent. Experience from the pilots was used to inform the design of the national scheme.

Under the national scheme EMA is not available to young people in custody aged 16 years and over. The reason is that EMA is an incentive to support young people with the costs of their learning, and for those in custody these costs are already met. Connexions services and other agencies promote EMA as part of a range of services and support to help young people leaving custody return to learning.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged between 16 and 18 years resident in Stoke-on-Trent have been in receipt of education maintenance allowances in each of the last three years. [210861]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following list gives the number of students aged 16 to 18 years who were resident in Stoke-on-Trent and received an education maintenance allowance in each of the last three academic years when the pilot operated in this local education authority area.

Academic year	*Total number of 16 to 18-year-olds*
2001/02	2,738
2002/03	2,623
2003/04	2,716

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years in each institution in Stoke-on-Trent were in receipt of education maintenance allowance in each of the past five years. [210862]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department did not collect data about the number of students aged 16 to 18 in each institution in Stoke-on-Trent who were in receipt of education maintenance allowance during the pilot stage.

We do collect this data for the national scheme which began in September 2004. The list gives those institutions in the Stoke-on-Trent local education authority area, and the number of students in each who have received education maintenance allowance as part of the national scheme, as at 6 January 2005. The total figure excludes students who are resident in the Stoke-on-Trent LEA area but who study in institutions outside this LEA area.

	School/College	*Scheme take up*
121460	St. Margaret Ward Catholic School and Arts College	61
124465	St. Thomas More Catholic College	51
124500	Abbey Hill School and Performing Arts College	10
124502	Heathfield Special School	3
124503	Kemball Special School	7
130815	Stoke-on-Trent College	1,109
130817	City of Stoke-on-Trent 6th Form College	848
131301	St. Joseph's College	45
NS1010	MORE Training Ltd.	8
Total		2,142

E-learning

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what groups are being consulted on whether e-learning credits are to be extended beyond 2005–06; and when a decision will be made. [210182]

Derek Twigg: Electronic learning credits are a valuable resource for schools that improve significantly access to, and stimulate the use of, high quality digital content for learning and teaching. £30 million was made available in 2002–03 and £100 million in each of 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. Since no commitment was made to continue funding beyond 2005–06 (as a specific ring-fenced allocation or otherwise) we are taking account of the views of head teachers, teachers, school governors, the Curriculum Online Content Advisory Board, Becta (the British Educational Technology and Communications Agency), the relevant trade associations as well as direct representations from the content developers and suppliers. Following consideration of these views and representations, a decision will be made as soon as possible as to whether and in what form funding for electronic learning credits might be extended.

Further Education

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the need for *(a)* level 1 and *(b)* level 2 further education courses in the London borough of Brent. [210478]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) was established in 2001 to plan and fund post-16 education and training. This is therefore a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Independent Schools (Pre-registration)

Mrs. Fitzsimons: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many independent schools there are in the pre-registration category; how many have had *(a)* one visit and *(b)* two allotted visits; and how many are faith schools, broken down by faith. [210849]

Derek Twigg: There are 148 provisionally registered schools in the transitional phase of registration. 123 have had one visit and 25 have had both of their allotted visits. 76 are faith schools, 41 being Muslim, 30 Christian Brethren, four Evangelical Christian and one Jewish.

Learning and Skills Councils

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will instruct learning and skills councils not to restrict the number of training providers contracting with them which offer courses leading to the same qualification. [210675]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Contracting with training providers is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council and Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive will write to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list her ministerial engagements out of London in February. [209732]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: The following is a list of the Secretary of State's planned ministerial engagements out of London in February 2005. These engagements are subject to change due to parliamentary commitments and final confirmation.

Date	*Venue*
2 February	World Sustainable Community Summit in Manchester
3 February	Specialist Sports Colleges Conference in Telford
21–22 February	EU Education and Youth Council, Brussels
23 February	Visit to Caroline Chisholm School in Northampton

Parliamentary Questions

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Maidenhead on 18 December 2004, reference 204405. [210484]

Margaret Hodge: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 79W.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Maidenhead on 21 December 2004, reference *(a)* 207312 and *(b)* 207313. [210998]

Margaret Hodge: My hon. Friend the Minister of State for School Standards has today replied to PQ 207312. I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 70–71W, for the reply to PQ 207313.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the implications of the Tomlinson Report for the number of places needed in 16–19 education. [210188]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The increased availability of personalised learning programmes to meet 14–19 year olds' needs, aptitudes and aspirations will raise participation and achievement in learning at 16–19. The Department's Five Year Strategy sets out our estimate that over the next five years we will need some 100,000 new 16–19 places, although the increase in demand will vary from place to place. That means we will need more school and college sixth forms and more apprenticeships and other vocational opportunities to give young people more choice.

Pupil Exclusions

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils have been permanently excluded from schools in *(a)* the West Suffolk parliamentary constituency and *(b)* the county of Suffolk in each year since 1997. [210697]

Derek Twigg: The available information is given in the table.

Exclusions data for 2000/01, 2001/02 and 2002/03 are known to have been under-reported by some schools. The Department carried out a checking exercise, but this was at LEA level only. As a result this information is not available at parliamentary constituency level for the three most recent years.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1,2]: number and percentage of permanently excluded pupils 1997/98 to 2002/03

	West Suffolk parliamentary constituency		*Suffolk LEA*	
	Number	*Percentage[3]*	*Number*	*Percentage[3]*
1997/98	18	0.14	129	0.13
1998/99	16	0.13	124	0.12
1999/2000	19	0.15	100	0.10
2000/01	n/a	n/a	147	0.14
2001/02	n/a	n/a	161	0.16
2002/03	n/a	n/a	150	0.15

n/a = Not available.

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.

Source:
Annual Schools Census

Pupil Numbers

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much of the increase in the number of places needed in 16 to 19-year-olds' education set out in her Department's five-year strategy is attributable to *(a)* increased participation rates and *(b)* the number of 16 to 19-year-olds in the period. [210948]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: We expect around 100,000 growth in the number of first time entrants in maintained schools and 16–18 FE between 2003/04 and 2008/09 as outlined in our five year strategy. We expect the 100,000 increase to be attributable to both demographic changes which account for 40 per cent. of the growth and policies to boost participation accounting for 60 per cent.

School Playing Fields

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to introduce a moratorium on the sale of school playing fields. [210374]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* We have no plans to introduce a moratorium on the sale of school playing fields. Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires local authorities and schools to obtain the written consent of the Secretary of State before they can dispose of any part of a school's playing field. Applications to sell school playing fields are only approved where it is clear that they meet the needs of local schools and their communities and that any proceeds are used to improve school sports provision or educational facilities.

Secondary School Violence

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to tackle violence in secondary schools. [209731]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: Although violence in schools is rare the Government takes the issue very seriously. We are determined to help schools create an environment that reduces the risk to an absolute minimum. To achieve that we have:

given every secondary school access to high-quality behaviour management training materials and expert advice from behaviour management consultants;

funded extra support for schools facing the greatest challenges through our Behaviour Improvement Programme;

made it clear that head teachers may permanently exclude pupils for violence even where this is a first offence;

provided £120 million for school security improvements since 1997;

issued a School Police Protocol to help schools develop effective relationships with the police; and

based over 300 police officers in schools.

In addition we are:

developing specific violence prevention materials through our Violence Reduction in Schools project;

developing curriculum materials to help secondary schools develop pupils' social, emotional and behavioural skills; and

consulting on new proposals on keeping knives out of schools, including searching suspect pupils.

Sixth Forms

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average size is of *(a)* maintained school sixth forms and *(b)* sixth form colleges in each (i) local education authority and (ii) learning and skills council area. [210174]

Derek Twigg: The requested information relating to maintained school sixth forms has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

The number of learners and size of sixth form colleges is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to the hon. Member with the information requested and to place a copy of his reply in the Library.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the retention rate for *(a)* maintained school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* other further education colleges was in each local education authority in the most recent period for which figures are available. [210179]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on retention rates in maintained school sixth forms is not available. Retention rates in sixth form colleges and other further education colleges are a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to the hon. Gentleman with the information requested and to place a copy of his reply in the Library.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the reasons for higher participation rates in full-time education and training of pupils from maintained schools with sixth forms. [210187]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The report "The Influence of the School in the decision to participate in learning post-16" indicated a number of reasons why the provision of a sixth form within a school might be an important influence on the decision of young people to participate in post-16 education and training:

> (i) "Schools with sixth forms have a ready made post-16 route and pupils are more channelled in their choices and decisions." Such schools often actively promoting post-16 academic routes, compared to other forms of post-16 participation which were much less clearly promoted. In schools with no sixth form there was a greater element of choice and decisions were aimed more generally at providing students with opportunities that more adequately addressed their needs.
>
> (ii) "Careers advice in schools with sixth forms was found to be qualitatively different from that in 11 to 16 schools." Pupils attending 11 to 16 schools were more positive about the careers education they had received and often exposed to a rich network of information, guidance and advice from diverse sources. Pupils in schools with sixth forms felt their advice and guidance to be less impartial than those in schools with no sixth form. Schools with sixth forms tended to have a strong academic tradition and a focus on university entrance, and an expectation that students would continue in full-time education post-16 which may not be the right decision for the young people concerned.
>
> (iii) "There was a greater tendency in schools with a sixth form to provide post-16 advice and guidance which is more closely related to academic sixth form provision." Knowledge about post-16 provision in schools and colleges tended to be strongest among pupils in schools with sixth forms and weakest in schools with no sixth forms. The opposite was true about knowledge of post-16 training and labour markets.

Other important influential issues of the school "in the decision of young people to participate in learning post-16" were the socio-economic environment of the school, and the schools' culture, ethos and leadership.

School Dinners

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Health and *(b)* others about the effects of partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats) in school dinners; and if she will make a statement. [210429]

Derek Twigg: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has had no recent discussions with the Secretary of State for Health, or any others, on this issue.

However, this Department works closely with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), who provide information to the public and Government on food safety, nutrition and diet. We have a formal agreement with FSA which requires them to inform us, without delay, of any information on food safety, nutrition and diet that requires us to take action.

This Department together with the Department of Health, Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs and the FSA, have jointly provided £1.1 million that will be used over the next three years to improve school meals. We will be revising both primary and secondary school meal standards, to reduce the consumption of fat, as well as salt and sugar and increasing the consumption of fruit and vegetables.

In our guidance, 'Healthy School Lunches', we advise that monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats should be used wherever possible. www.dfes.gov.uk/schoollunches.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE

Zimbabwe

16. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he next expects to discuss with his EU colleagues the range of sanctions in place against Zimbabwe. [210398]

Mr. Mullin: The EU's targeted measures against Zimbabwe run until 18 February 2005. We see no evidence that Zimbabwe has addressed the EU's concerns on human rights and democracy. We therefore believe that sanctions should remain in place, and are discussing this with EU partners now.

Iraq

18. **Patrick Mercer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the level of violence in Iraq has risen since Christmas. [210400]

Mr. Alexander: Since Christmas we have seen a number of attacks designed to disrupt election operations. Both the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission and the Iraqi Government have made clear their determination that the elections go ahead on time. The UK, with its allies in the Multi-National Force will continue to support the Iraqi authorities to that end.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how the openness of the Iraqi electoral process will be assured; who has overall responsibility for the process of the 30 January elections; who appointed them; what their qualifications are for the role; whether the names of would-be candidates who have not been allowed to stand will be disclosed; whether reasons will be given for their ineligibility; who will monitor the polls and undertake the count; who the returning officers will be; whether there will be independent monitoring of the elections; and if he will make a statement. [207220]

Mr. Rammell: The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) is responsible for planning, organising and supervising the electoral process. The IECI is headed by nine Commissioners. The Commissioners were nominated by the UN following a rigorous selection procedure and approved by Prime Minister Allawi. None of the commissioners had any direct experience of managing an electoral process with the exception of a non-voting commissioner. Carlos Valenzuela of the UN. Valenzuela has extensive experience of conducting elections in post-conflict environments.

No prospective candidates were rejected by the IECI. The elections will be observed by national election monitors that have been trained by international organisations. In addition, an international mission to assess the elections is being organised by the Canadian Electoral Commission. The IECI is responsible for co-ordinating the return of ballot papers, the counting process and tabulation of results. The official result will be announced around 20 days after the election but a probable share of seats for the Transitional National Assembly will be announced within a week of the election.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements are in place to ensure that no non-Iraqis cast votes, or arrange for votes to be included in the poll count, in the Iraqi elections on 30 January; and if he will make a statement. [207249]

Mr. Rammell: Only Iraqi citizens that appear on the electoral roll are eligible to vote. The electoral roll was compiled from the Public Distribution System used to allocate food rations. On polling day, voters will be checked against the voter register before being allowed to enter the polling station to cast their vote. Election monitors working for the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) will supervise polling stations.

Iraqis living outside Iraq will also be able to cast their votes. The IECI asked the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to put in place arrangements for voting in 14 countries (including the UK). In order to register to vote, Iraqis will be required to provide evidence of their eligibility. Voters must have been born in Iraq or have a father who was born there. Arrangements for monitoring out of country voting are currently being developed by the IECI.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the merits of an independent inquiry into the number of *(a)* Iraqi military personnel and *(b)* Iraqi civilians killed or injured by the activities of coalition forces in Iraq since 19 March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [209234]

Mr. Rammell: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary explained in his written statement to Parliament on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 92–95WS, we believe that the Iraqi authorities remain in the best position to record casualties in their country.

An independent inquiry is highly unlikely to be able to gain better access and provide more accurate information on casualties than the Iraqi Government.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which period is covered by the Iraqi Ministry of Health data for casualties which the Government are using as their estimate of casualties. [209380]

Mr. Rammell: The Iraqi Minister of Health released a statement on 29 October 2004 in which he quoted statistics covering the period of 5 April 2004 to 5 October 2004. These statistics, which are compiled by some 180 hospitals, show that 3,853 Iraqis were killed and 15,517 were injured during this period. We continue to believe that this is the most reliable data available.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the price in dollars of 20 litres of *(a)* kerosene and *(b)* petrol was in Baghdad in January (i) 2000 and (ii) 2005. [210253]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer of 24 January 2005]:* Official prices for kerosene and benzene (petrol) have not changed since 1999. Using an exchange rate of 1 Iraqi Dinar (ID) = 0.0008$ on 01 January 2000 and 1ID = 0.00068$ on 01 January 2005, 20 litres of kerosene cost 16 cents in January 2000 and 14 cents in January 2005. 20 litres of benzene cost 32 cents in 2000 and 27 cents in 2005.

Electoral Information (British Citizens Abroad)

19. **Mr. Evans:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Electoral Commission relating to the dissemination of information to British citizens living abroad who are entitled to vote in UK elections. [210401]

Mr. Mullin: Officials from my department have been in regular communication with the Electoral Commission in support of their efforts to publicise information to British citizens living abroad who are entitled to vote in UK elections.

Middle East Peace Process

20. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policies are for taking forward the peace process in Israel and the Palestinian territories. [210402]

Mr. Rammell: Our policy, as made clear during my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's visit to Washington on 11–12 November, has been to support Palestinian presidential elections, the improvement of Palestinian infrastructure, and Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement plan. We remain committed to the road map. We are working to ensure that the London meeting on 1 March, which aims to support Palestinian institution building, contributes to progress on the road map.

21. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his French counterpart on the middle east peace process. [210403]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to French Foreign Minister Barnier on 15 January regarding the middle east peace process, specifically to discuss the London meeting on 1 March on strengthening the Palestinian Authority. The Foreign Secretary and Foreign Minister Barnier agreed that the London conference should contribute to progress on the road map.

Kashmir

22. **Mr. Byrne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of recent ministerial visits to Kashmir. [210405]

Mr. Alexander: During my recent visit to Pakistan, I did not visit Pakistan-administered Kashmir. However, I did discuss India/Pakistan relations and Kashmir with Prime Minister Aziz and Foreign Minister Kasuri. I assured them that the United Kingdom fully supported the ongoing dialogue between Pakistan and India. My right hon. Friend Mr. Blunkett and my hon. Friend Mr. O'Brien visited Pakistan-administered Kashmir in February 2004 and December 2003 respectively.

Afghanistan

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the size of the poppy harvest in Afghanistan has been in each year since 2000. [209283]

Mr. Rammell: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducts an annual survey into the level of opium poppy cultivation and production in Afghanistan. It has reported levels of cultivation and production since 1999 as follows:

	Hectares	*Tonnes*
1999	91,000	4,600
2000	82,000	3,300
2001	8,000	185
2002	74,000	3,400
2003	80,000	3,600
2004	131,000	4,200

The UNODC figures for 1999, 2000 and 2001 were recorded under the Taliban regime. The low level of cultivation and low production figure in 2001 reflect the Taliban ban on opium cultivation; the ban did not however address the underlying causes of poppy cultivation in Afghanistan, which was enforced with a mix of threat and bribery and drove up the price of opium, benefiting those with opium stockpiles.

Detained British Citizens

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what guidance was issued to British consular staff and others visiting *(a)* Guantanamo Bay and *(b)* other places of detention overseas on measures to guard against allegations that they may have implicitly condoned torture and ill treatment or encouraged prisoners to make false confessions; and what plans he has to issue further guidance. [209047]

Mr. Mullin: Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff visited the British nationals at Guantanamo Bay to check on their welfare. The staff concerned were aware of the importance of the human rights of the detainees and of the need to report information about this. The visits have been reported to Parliament, to the detainees' families and to Ministers.

UK intelligence personnel also visited Guantanamo to interview detainees to gather information that might prove valuable in the protection of the UK and its citizens. These officials were also aware of the importance of the human rights of the detainees.

In May 2004, the Permanent Under-Secretary of the FCO issued guidance to all staff on reporting torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. This guidance was then included in the FCO Human Rights Guidelines which are available to all staff on the FCO intranet.

Egypt

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Egypt regarding their response to the killing of Christians in El-Kosheh in January 2000. [209564]

Mr. Rammell: The sectarian violence in El-Kosheh in January 2001, which left 20 Christians and one Muslim dead, was deeply concerning. We have followed the case closely and made our concerns known at the time; including visiting the area. We were initially encouraged that the Prosecutor-General persistently sought judicial review of early judgments in the case. However we are disappointed that, due to the Court of Cassation's ruling last year, the legal process is now at an end.

We regularly raise human rights issues with the Egyptian authorities. Most recently we raised our concerns about the requirement to specify religious affiliation on identity cards, which is a concern for minority religious groups. In January 2005 we raised the individual cases of Heidi Salib, Wafaa Constantine and William Shaiboub.

Eritrea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Eritrea concerning the arrest of 60 members of the Ream Charismatic Church in Asmara. [209703]

Mr. Mullin: We raise the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly. Our Chargé d'Affaires raised this case on 18 January and I raised the issue with President Isaias, in Asmara, during my visit there in January last year. We will continue to make clear our concern.

Geronimo Agency

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what penalty clauses have been included in his Department's contract with the Geronimo PR agency to be effective if the agency fails to achieve the required coverage for the EU and the proposed EU constitution. [210949]

Mr. MacShane: The presence of penalty clauses is the same as for any other standard Central Office of Information contract in line with contracts issued by other Government Departments.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the names are of the employees of the Geronimo agency who *(a)* presented the company's proposal to the Department and *(b)* will work on his Department's account. [210950]

Mr. MacShane: The release of the names of the individuals at Geronimo PR is a matter for that company.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will publish the contract between his Department and the Geronimo PR agency. [210951]

Mr. MacShane: The contract between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Geronimo will follow the standard Central Office of Information framework agreement with all of their roster agencies. Further details are commercially sensitive.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list agencies which *(a)* tendered for and *(b)* were shortlisted for the contract to promote the EU and the proposed constitution. [210952]

Mr. MacShane: *(a)* Geronimo PR, Grayling, Weber Shandwick and Harrison Cowley.

(b) Geronimo PR, Grayling, Weber Shandwick and Harrison Cowley.

Guantanamo Bay

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings he has planned with US officials to discuss the status of British nationals held at Guantanamo Bay. [206224]

Mr. Mullin: I refer my hon. Friend to the Statement my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave to the House on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 173–74.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK residents with indefinite leave to remain in the UK are held at Guantanamo Bay; and what their names are. [209375]

Mr. Mullin: We are aware of five. In accordance with our obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998, we are not in a position to give their names.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has received concerning Guantanamo Bay prisoners who are residents with indefinite leave to remain in the UK. [209376]

Mr. Mullin: We have received representations from some family members, lawyers, MPs and Peers on behalf of the five British residents at Guantanamo Bay that we should provide them with consular assistance.

India/Pakistan

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to facilitate and support talks between India and Pakistan about safeguarding against nuclear conflict. [205908]

Mr. Alexander: We warmly welcome the on-going dialogue between India and Pakistan on nuclear confidence-building measures as part of the composite dialogue process. We hope that both countries will work together to implement swiftly confidence-building measures, e.g pre-notification of missile tests, following their recent meeting on 14–15 December. We continue to discuss issues relating to nuclear non-proliferation with the governments of both countries.

Iran

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's assessment of Iran's nuclear programme. [210388]

Mr. MacShane: We continue to have serious concerns about Iran's nuclear programme. Together with the French and German Governments and representatives of the European Union, we are engaged in dialogue with the Iranian Government in order to resolve these concerns. The Government believe that, to restore confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme, it is essential for Iran to agree, as part of this process, to cease permanently all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs published on 18 January a White Paper, "Iran's nuclear programme: a collection of documents" which draws together public documents on Iran's nuclear programme since September 2002.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the extent of persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Iran. [210118]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer of 24 January 2005]*: We have no specific information on the situation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Iran. We continue to receive reports of discrimination against members of Iran's religious minorities, including the surveillance, intimidation, and arrest of members of Iran's Christian communities. We have made clear to the Iranian authorities on many occasions that this is unacceptable, and have called upon them to permit Iranians of all faiths to practice their beliefs freely and without interference, in line with Iran's international obligations.

Jamaica

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Jamaican citizens have been refused entry into the United Kingdom in each of the last three years. [209920]

Mr. Mullin: From April 2002-March 2003 the visa section in Kingston received 10,185 applications and refused 2,736; a refusal rate of 26.9 per cent.

Following the introduction of the requirement for all Jamaican nationals (including visitors) to have visas to enter the United Kingdom in January 2003, applications from April 2003-March 2004 went up to 26, 603 and 11,646 were refused; a refusal rate of 43.8 per cent.

Figures on refusal rates for 2004–05 are not yet available. When they are, they will be posted on the UKvisas website at www.ukvisas.gov.uk. Further entry clearance statistics are available on the UKvisas website at "Entry Clearance: Facts and Figures".

Jordan

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Jordan regarding Mrs. Siham Qandah's custody of her children; and if he will make a statement. [209565]

Mr. Mullin: This case remains sub judice within the Islamic Court system in Jordan. Through our embassy in Amman, we continue to follow the legal process and, where appropriate, draw the Jordanian authorities' attention to the strong concerns which the case has raised in the UK and elsewhere, both over the welfare of Mrs. Qandah and her children, and over the underlying principles involved.

Madagascar

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how the UK diplomatic presence in and relations with Madagascar will be maintained if the British embassy is closed; [210081]

(2) if he will appoint a one man diplomatic mission at Chargé d'Affaires level instead of the proposed nomination of an honorary Consul in place of the embassy in Madagascar. [210082]

Mr. Mullin: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary explained in his written statement on 15 December 2004, *Official Report,* columns 137–40WS, we have decided to close our Embassy in Madagascar, while maintaining an honorary Consul in Antananarivo and non-resident accreditation from Port Louis. This reflects the need to better align our resources with our priorities, to maximise efficiency, and to ensure that the UK has a cost-effective and flexible network of overseas representation.

Palestinian Authority

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government plans to provide the new Palestinian leadership to carry out internal reforms to strengthen security apparatus in order to tackle powerful warlords and corrupt officials, and establish law and order in Palestinian society. [209035]

Mr. Rammell: We have been providing technical support and assistance to the Palestinian security services in order to help them to effectively tackle terrorism. The UK-supported Ramallah Central Operations Room in the West Bank has already had some success in foiling attacks against Israelis. The London meeting on 1 March is intended to support the new Palestinian leadership in preparing for disengagement and implementing the Roadmap. It therefore includes work to help the Palestinians strengthen their security apparatus, as well as facilitating reform in the fields of governance and the economy. We are committed to working with the Palestinians, our European partners, the US, Egypt and others in order to improve the infrastructure necessary for establishing a Palestinian state.

Proof of Death

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) which *(a)* Departments, *(b)* Ministers and *(c)* officials are involved in the review into the criteria necessary for proof of death abroad in exceptional circumstances following the Asian tsunami disaster; [210103]

(2) what progress has been made in reviewing the criteria necessary for proof of death abroad in exceptional circumstances following the Asian tsunami disaster; [210104]

(3) who will be consulted in the course of the review into the criteria necessary for proof of death abroad in exceptional circumstances following the Asian tsunami disaster; [210105]

(4) what timescale has been set for the review into the criteria necessary for proof of death abroad in exceptional circumstances following the Asian tsunami disaster. [210106]

Mr. Mullin: *[holding answer of 24 January 2005]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the written statement my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Alexander) made on 24 January 2005, *Official Report,* columns 5–6WS.

South Africa

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of reports of xenophobia in South Africa aimed at refugees from Sudan; what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have made in regard to this issue to (i) members and (ii) representatives of the Government of South Africa; and if he will make a statement. [206312]

Mr. Mullin: I am aware of a UN High Commission for Refugees report of 15 December describing the experiences of Sudanese refugees in South Africa. We have not discussed these with the South African authorities. But the South African Government is working to address the broad issue of xenophobia in South African society. The UK Government has a regular dialogue with the South African Government on human rights issues, and is engaged in project work in South Africa in this field.

Syria

David Cairns: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Syria concerning support for Hezbollah and Hamas. [210399]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary raised these issues on 18 October 2004 with Syrian Foreign Minister Shara'a during the latter's visit to London.

During this and other discussions with the Syrian Government, we urged Syria to use its influence with Hezbollah to refrain from the use of violence.

We have also regularly raised with Syria the need to address the problems created by rejectionist groups such as Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Trinidad and Tobago

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he plans to review his Department's travel advice in relation to Trinidad and Tobago. [209893]

Mr. Rammell: We keep all Travel Advice under constant review. At a minimum it is reviewed once a month and re-published every three months. The Travel Advice for Trinidad and Tobago was last reviewed on 19 January.

Tsunami Relief

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what arrangements were made by the Government to aid British passport holders in the wake of the Asian tsunami. [210413]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer of 24 January]:* As soon as the Government received news of the tsunami in the Indian ocean, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) activated its emergency plans for handling a major crisis overseas involving British nationals.

On 26 December, the FCO established temporary offices working in all the affected areas to offer support and assistance to British nationals. Providing this support was the priority of all FCO posts in those areas. Our Embassy in Bangkok and our High Commission in Colombo were reinforced with consular staff from both London and other posts in the region. A rapid deployment team of 18 was sent to Colombo. There are currently 45 staff in Bangkok and 32 in Phuket providing consular assistance.

In the immediate aftermath of the event, FCO staff provided those British nationals in the affected areas with the full range of consular support including helping them to access medical facilities, issuing emergency travel documents and registering missing persons. An FCO charter flight brought 98 passengers back from Thailand on 1 January.

The Government also ensured that there were full reception arrangements at airports for people returning to the UK. This included tailored medical attention where necessary, assistance with getting home and access to psychological and emotional support services. The British Red Cross also established a Help Line for victims of the disaster and their family and a family support network for those affected.

FCO officials and UK police personnel are now working with the families of the victims to repatriate remains where appropriate and to help the injured get home. There are 84 UK police personnel in the affected areas helping to identify people as quickly as possible. Police family liaison officers have been assigned to bereaved families. There are currently over 300 liaison officers assigned to families. The FCO has put together a package of financial and other assistance to those affected by the tsunami. This package includes meeting the cost of repatriating remains; immediate medical expenses for those seriously injured; medical evacuation; long-term psychological support; and return travel for two members of the victim's family to the region and five nights accommodation.

Ukraine

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governments of Estonia and Latvia about the political situation in Ukraine. [210397]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary and I have discussed Ukraine regularly with Estonian, Latvian and other EU partners over the last few months, most recently at the 13 December General Affairs and External Relations Council. I will be having further talks in Poland and Lithuania this week. Ukraine is also on the agenda for the next General Affairs and External Relations Council on 31 January.

West Papua

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to seek to facilitate dialogue between the Indonesian Government and the Papuan people to find a peaceful resolution to the West Papua conflict. [209003]

Mr. Alexander: We have consistently made clear to the Indonesian Government our support for full implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law. We believe this takes into account the aspirations of the Papuan people and respects Indonesia's territorial integrity. The new Government of President Yudhoyono has publicly committed itself to taking steps to implement this Law. We welcome this.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place with the United Nations regarding the possibility of sending UN observers to monitor the human rights situation in West Papua. [209032]

Mr. Alexander: We are not aware of any discussions held with the UN to send Human Rights observers to Papua. We have followed the situation in Papua closely, and continue to make clear to the Indonesian Government our support for full implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy Law.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Committees of the House

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals to merge the Modernisation of the House of Commons and Procedure Committees. [210426]

Mr. Hain: Decisions about the appointment of select committees are taken at the start of a new Parliament. The re-establishment of the Modernisation Committee would, of course, be subject to the approval of the House, as would any proposal to change the Procedure Committee's terms of reference.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding on the role of the Physical Integrator as part of the Future Aircraft Carrier project. [203934]

Mr. Ingram: There is no such Memorandum of Understanding. The role of the Physical Integrator (PI) on the Future Aircraft Carrier project will be developed and agreed between Alliance members during the remainder of the assessment phase.

Army Training Ground, Otterburn

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured as a result of accidents during exercises at the Army Training Ground at Otterburn in each of the last 10 years. [209153]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Since 1 January 2000 no service or civilian personnel have been killed and six service personnel have been injured as a result of accidents during exercises at the Army Training Ground at Otterburn. Information regarding deaths and injuries at Otterburn before 2000 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Competitive Tenders

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much work was put out to competitive tender *(a)* RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* RAF Marham in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [209518]

Mr. Ingram: None. This excludes contracts awarded in support of station services.

Departmental Efficiency Programme

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planned headcount changes attributable to his Department's efficiency programme are for the *(a)* Army Base Repair Organisation, *(b)* Defence Aviation Repair Agency, *(c)* Defence Science and Technology Laboratories, *(d)* Meteorological Office and *(e)* UK Hydrographic Office for financial years (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [209332]

Mr. Ingram: The published headcount reductions for the Ministry of Defence Efficiency Programme does not include headcount changes for these agencies.

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the planned cashable savings attributable to his Department's efficiency programme are for the *(a)* Defence Medical Training Agency, *(b)* Defence Procurement Agency, *(c)* Defence Storage and Distribution Agency, *(d)* Defence Transport and Movements Agency and *(e)* Defence Vetting Agency in financial years (i) 2006–07 and (ii) 2007–08. [209342]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence Efficiency Programme brings together those activities which have resulted from strategic level judgements on the modernisation we needed in order to better meet future operational and business needs. Its benefits are tracked principally on a functional basis (e.g. Human Resources, Finance, etc.) rather than at individual budget areas. Further information on the MOD Efficiency Programme and how it will be delivered is contained in the MOD Efficiency Technical Note which was published on 30 October and can be found on the Departmental website at http://www.mod.uk/issues/finance/efficiency.htm.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* costs and *(b)* penalties would arise from a decision to cancel Tranche 2 of the Eurofighter Typhoon. [210597]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Under the international collaborative production arrangements for Typhoon, manufacturing work has been allocated between partner nations in proportion to their respective numerical requirements for the aircraft. Cancellation of the United Kingdom's Tranche 2 order would necessitate re-allocation of workshare to partner nations in order to re-balance these proportions and the UK would be required to compensate the other nations for the extra costs incurred, up to the total amount the UK would have paid had we not cancelled the order.

In addition to these costs, the cancellation of Tranche 2 would result in a failure to equip the Royal Air Force with a key element of its future fighting capability, a significant loss of UK manufacturing and an associated loss of jobs and skills across the

European Rapid Reaction Force

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he expects the UK contribution to the European Rapid Reaction Force to be future rapid effect system equipped when that vehicle family enters service. [202986]

Mr. Ingram: There is no standing European Rapid Reaction Force nor any EU agreement to create one. What has sometimes been referred to as a "European Rapid Reaction Force" is, in fact, a catalogue of forces which member states could make available to the EU should they choose to participate in a particular EU-led operation. Any contribution to a particular EU-led operation would depend on the operation's requirements and the availability of forces at the time.

One of the purposes of FRES is to improve the ability of United Kingdom forces to achieve rapid effect by providing a highly capable but rapidly deployable family of vehicles as the central pillar of the Medium Weight Force. Therefore, it is likely that the UK may, in the future, offer FRES equipped forces as part of the EU "catalogue".

Gibraltar Police

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions in *(a)* the joint negotiating machinery between his Department and the Gibraltar Service Police Association and *(b)* other forum his Department formally raised its intention to deduct moneys from police officers' pay in relation to rent and other allowances; and if he will place a copy of the minutes relating to such discussions in the Library. [209693]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* Officials in Gibraltar wrote to the Chairman of the GSPSA in February 2004 setting out in detail the rationale of the Department's position and explaining that recovery action would only be taken for the last 12 months overpayment. The subject was discussed again at the GSPSA Whitley meeting in May 2004. In June 2004 Officials wrote to each individual affected by the overpayment explaining that recovery action would be taken. A subsequent letter was sent in November 2004 as a result of a recalculation, reconfirming the intent to deduct monies owed. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 20 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 711W, whereby a copy of the minutes of the GSPSA Whitley Committee meetings were placed in the Library of the House.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place a moratorium on the deduction of Gibraltar Service Police salaries until discussions between the Gibraltar Service Police Association and the Association's solicitor have been concluded; and if he will make a statement. [209695]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 19 January 2005]:* No. The Gibraltar Services Police Association has been aware of the Department's intention to recover the overpayment of rent allowance since June 2003.

Iraq

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the free post service to Iraq. [207310]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans to change the current entitlement to free aerogramme letters (blueys) or their electronic version (eblueys) to service personnel deployed on operations.

In respect of the free postal packet scheme to Iraq which ceased on 8 April 2004, there are no plans to permanently re-instate this service. I refer my hon. Friend to my written ministerial statement of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 70WS, and subsequent answers of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1155W, to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), 1 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 1605W, to the hon. Member for Mid-Norfolk (Mr. Simpson), 5 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1527W, to the hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Randall), 15 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 811W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), 1 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 713W and 4 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1882W to my hon. Friend the Member for Bately and Spen (Mr. Wood).

However, on 3 November 2004 when the Prime Minister announced the temporary reinstatement of the free postal packet scheme for a limited period at Christmas, he did promise a review after the scheme finished (15 December 2004), 3 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 304.

A formal review cannot be carried out until the detailed costs of the scheme have been captured from the Royal Mail Group, Defence Logistic Agency and British Forces Post Office. This is unlikely to happen before February 2005. However, I can inform the House that over the period 17 November-15 December 2004 when the scheme was in place approximately 112,000 Kg of packets were successfully processed by the British Forces Post Office Depot at Mill Hill so that they would reach service personnel deployed worldwide in time for Christmas.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK service men have been repatriated from service in Iraq since 1 October 2004 because of injury, broken down by type of injury suffered. [209950]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Since 1 October 2004, 82 United Kingdom Service personnel have been evacuated from Iraq as a result of injury. 23 of those injuries are believed to be the result of hostile action. 59 are the result of accidents or other incidents.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which area of responsibility will be allocated to 1st Battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers once they are operational in Iraq. [210379]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The 1st Battalion The Royal Highland Fusiliers (Princess Margaret's Own Glasgow and Ayrshire Regiment) will, once operational, be used to relieve acclimatised theatre troops from static guarding and security tasks at a variety of locations.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions he has visited *(a)* The Black Watch, *(b)* The Royal Scots, *(c)* The Highlanders, *(d)* The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, *(e)* The King's Own Scottish Borderers and *(f)* The Royal Highland Fusiliers regiments; and where each visit took place. [201569]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries (Mr. Brown) on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1374W.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202557]

Mr. Caplin: Defence Ministers aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the day named and endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately this is not always possible, but the Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

Information relating to the percentage of answers that failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Second World War Anniversary

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Government have to commemorate on 10 July the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War; and if he will make a statement. [208201]

Mr. Caplin: The events in London on 10 July will begin with a Service of Thanksgiving and Commemoration in Westminster Abbey. This will be followed by a lunch for veterans in the grounds of Buckingham Palace hosted by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh.

In the afternoon, an event of reminiscence and remembrance will take place on Horse Guards Parade, this will begin with a unique evocation of the period, using entertainment to take veterans back in time. There will then be a period of remembrance encompassing a two minute silence.

The Queen will watch a fly-past of vintage Second World War aircraft from the Palace Balcony. A poppy drop from a Lancaster Bomber will bring the day to a close.

Telephone Numbers

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205835]

Mr. Caplin: The use of non-geographical 0870 numbers in the Department is determined at the local level in accordance with individual business requirements. Records of non-geographic 0870 numbers and details of services accessed through them are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much revenue his Department has received from the use of non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers for the period 1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004. [205845]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Travel Costs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203783]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* Since 1999, the Government publishes on an annual basis, the total costs of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. The travel costs for those special advisers who accompanied their Minister is included in the annual list on Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers. Details on the cost of domestic travel for Ministers and special advisers is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Tsunami (Military Assistance)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what military *(a)* assistance and *(b)* aid the UK has provided to each country following the tsunami disaster; what plans he has made for further military (i) assistance and (ii) aid to each country; and if he will make a statement. [209329]

Mr. Ingram: The following military assets were assigned to assist in the relief operation in the Indian ocean.

The frigate HMS Chatham (which carries two Lynx helicopters) was redirected to the area on 30 December, arriving on 3 January; and the support ship RFA Diligence, already in the region, joined Chatham off Sri Lanka on 5 January. These vessels have undertaken a number of relief tasks, including assistance to the town of Baticoloa in the east of Sri Lanka, and provision of engineers to the Maldives to assist with refurbishment of generators and desalination equipment. Chatham and Diligence have worked closely with an Observation, Liaison and Reconnaissance Team (OLRT) which deployed to Colombo on 31 December, part of which also deployed to the Maldives on 6 January. Both Chatham and Diligence, as well as the OLRT, have now completed their tasking and are leaving the area.

Of the five C-130 aircraft made available to support DFID, two have been used so far: one to move aid supplies between Norway and Denmark, and one to transport equipment to Sri Lanka. The larger C-17 aircraft has been used across the affected region. The Tristar has been used to bring tents and fuel into Penang for onward transport into the affected areas.

A further OLRT deployed to Indonesia on 2 January, including to the Aceh region. MOD liaison officers have been deployed with the US, Australian and Indonesian military headquarters in the region.

Two Bell 212 helicopters from the Gurkha Garrison in Brunei are currently conducting recce, humanitarian assistance and liaison tasks with the Australian forces in the Aceh region.

Further, small, deployments of niche capabilities such as logistics planners and engineers have also taken place in response to DfID and OLRT requests.

The MOD continues to work closely with DFID to determine the requirement for military assistance over the coming period.

Wounded British Soldiers

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which facilities wounded British soldiers are being treated in the UK. [210194]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* When casualties are aeromedically evacuated to the United Kingdom, the decision as to which hospital they should be treated is made in conjunction with the Department of Health (DoH) on the basis of clinical need and bed availability. However the majority are treated at Selly Oak hospital in Birmingham.

Those requiring specialist treatment will be referred to the most appropriate facility for their needs.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Bottled Water

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission (1) how many bottles of water were purchased by Departments of the House last year for consumption other than in restaurants and cafeterias; and what the cost was; [210271]

(2) if the Commission will make it their policy to replace bottled water with tap water in *(a)* Westminster Hall, *(b)* committee rooms and *(c)* other meeting rooms. [210272]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Prior to 1994, the SAA Department provided tap water for Committee and meeting rooms. A trial was conducted in that year in response to requests from Members who frequently found the tap water stale and undrinkable. It was found that the use of bottled water was significantly more convenient and required fewer staff, as well as being more hygienic and better tasting. Subsequent experience with operating this system has confirmed these benefits. They are particularly valuable given the increase in the number of committee rooms following the opening of Portcullis House and the earlier sittings of committees under the revised sitting hours. For these reasons there are no plans to return to the previous arrangements.

During financial year 2003–04 the SAA Department spent £11,530 on water for Westminster Hall, committee and other meeting rooms, equating to approximately 25,000 bottles.

Catering (Food Waste)

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what the policy is on the disposal of *(a)* untouched food left over from receptions in the House and *(b)* residuary food waste from catering outlets. [210273]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The House of Commons Refreshment Department is required to take all reasonable precautions and exercise due diligence to ensure that their premises and working practices comply with the provisions of the Food Safety Act 1990 and associated regulations. Its food disposal policy is designed to meet these legal obligations and to take all possible precautions against the risk of causing food poisoning to any person consuming food prepared by or sold by the Refreshment Department.

The policy on the disposal of food left over from receptions is that same as the policy on the disposal of left-over foods from its catering outlets. Fresh-cooked foods that have retained a core temperature of 65°C or above while on display are chilled rapidly and are then either held chilled or frozen for re-use. Hot foods that have fallen below this safe temperature, or that have been re-heated, are disposed of with the general refuse. Chilled foods that have been maintained at a temperature of 8°C or below are retained and re-offered for sale provided that they are within any "use-by" date stamp. Foods which have exceeded 8°C are also disposed of with the general waste.

Although the Department makes every effort to re-use foods that are still safe to consume, there are some occasions on which this is not possible. From time to time, the Department has contacted charities assisting the homeless to discuss the possibility of donating left-over food. Such inquiries to-date have been unsuccessful for two principal reasons: the charities (as part of their own due diligence procedures required under the food hygiene legislation) are unwilling to accept foods that have been prepared in our own kitchens; and, the charities have been unable or unwilling to make collection arrangements for any packaged foods because of the infrequency and relatively low quantity of such food being available to them.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Coal Mines

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether the extinguishing of burning coal mines falls within the scope of the clean development mechanisms introduced by the Kyoto Protocol; [209841]

(2) what assistance his Department has provided to developing countries seeking to extinguish burning coal mines. [209842]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 1997, the Kyoto Protocol established the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). The purpose of the CDM is to enable developed countries and economies in transition (more precisely, those countries that are included in Annex I to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change) to meet their greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets (5 per cent. compared to 1990 levels by the period 2008–12) at lowest possible cost by undertaking projects in developing countries. To be eligible under the CDM, projects must also assist in the achievement of sustainable development, and contribute to the attainment of the environmental goals of the Framework Convention.

To fall within the scope of the CDM, any project proposal to extinguish burning coal mines would need to meet these three criteria. It would further ~~need to be~~ shown that the resulting emissions reductions were "additional" (i.e. going beyond what would have happened in the absence of the project) and calculated in accordance with an approved CDM methodology. To date, the Department for International Development (DFID) has not received any requests from developing countries to provide assistance to extinguish coal mine fires. We would encourage any country seeking international support to consider using the CDM.

Commission for Africa

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will publish the minutes of meetings of the Commission for Africa. [210298]

Hilary Benn: Reports of the two Commission meetings which have taken place are available on the Commission for Africa website. www.commissionforafrica.org.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on what date he expects the report of the Commission for Africa to be published. [210299]

Hilary Benn: The members of the Commission for Africa are still working on their report and have not yet set a date for publication. Subject to discussion at the next full meeting of the Commission in February, the report may be published around the middle of March.

Debt Relief

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his budget is for spending on heavily indebted poor countries debt relief in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08 from (i) existing departmental spending plans and (ii) sources additional to those plans. [210300]

Hilary Benn: DFID's contribution to HIPC debt relief covers the UK pledge to the HIPC Trust Fund and the UK's policy of going beyond the requirements of HIPC to cancel 100 per cent. of all bilateral debts to HIPC countries. The vast majority of HIPC debt write-off is financed by the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD).

For the HIPC Trust Fund, DFID has budgeted £29 million in 2005–06, £20 million in 2006–07 and £20 million in 2007–08.

It is not possible to predict accurately how much the 100 per cent. bilateral policy will cost DFID because the amount that will be cancelled under HIPC requirements (financed by ECGD) is not yet known. DFID has provisionally budgeted £14 million in 2005–06, £25 million in 2006–07 and £10 million in 2007–08.

In addition, many HIPC countries will benefit from the UK's new multilateral debt relief initiative. The total DFID budget for this initiative is £30 million in 2005–06, £40 million in 2006–07 and £50 million in 2007–08. HIPC countries account for approximately 70 per cent. of the total cost.

DFID has no budgets additional to DFID's existing spending plans.

Departmental Employees

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many of his Department's employees in each country in receipt of development aid from the UK were of *(a)* UK nationality, *(b)* local origin and *(c)* other origin in the latest year for which figures are available. [210317]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Details of DFID current staff shown by local origin and by UK and other nationality are set out in the following table. We are unable to provide figures for UK nationality as a separate category as such data is provided by staff on a voluntary basis and thus any figures may not be completely accurate.

Country	*Number of UK based staff*	*Number of staff of local origin*	*Total*
Afghanistan	10	7	17
Angola	1	1	2
Bangladesh	27	131	158
Barbados	8	17	25
Bolivia	2	12	14
Botswana	1	0	1
Brazil	6	9	15
Bulgaria	1	0	1
Burundi	1	2	3
Cambodia	6	5	11
China	21	22	43
Congo—Democratic Republic	8	10	18
Costa Rica	1	0	1
Ethiopia	15	40	55
Gambia	1	0	1
Ghana	14	36	50
Guyana	5	3	8
Honduras	1	5	6
India	24	117	141

Country	*Number of UK based staff*	*Number of staff of local origin*	*Total*
Indonesia	6	3	9
Iraq	9	0	9
Jamaica	3	0	3
Jerusalem—West Bank	4	3	7
Kazakhstan	1	0	1
Kenya	11	36	47
Kosovo	0	13	13
Kyrgyzstan	1	3	4
Lesotho	2	0	2
Malawi	22	53	75
Moldova	0	3	3
Montserrat	6	4	10
Mozambique	11	17	28
Myanmar	1	0	1
Nepal	18	63	81
Nicaragua	3	12	15
Nigeria	23	62	85
Pakistan	10	21	31
Peru	2	4	6
Romania	1	0	1
Russian Federation	4	10	14
Rwanda	11	22	33
Serbia and Montenegro	2	4	6
Sierra Leone	11	0	11
South Africa	24	44	68
Sri Lanka	5	5	10
St Helena	8	0	8
Sudan	6	0	6
Tanzania	15	30	45
Thailand	15	17	32
Turks and Caicos Islands	5	0	5
Uganda	20	35	55
Ukraine	2	8	10
Vietnam	13	20	33
Windward Islands	1	0	1
Yemen	1	1	2
Zambia	14	23	37
Zimbabwe	8	19	27
Grand total	452	952	1,404

Iraq

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in determining the details of the system replacing food rations with cash payments in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [209947]

Hilary Benn: The Government of Iraq has said that it is committed over the medium term, to enhancing the effectiveness of social safety nets in Iraq by moving from a food ration system, which handed out virtually free food to the entire population of Iraq, to a cash distribution system targeted at the poor and unemployed. The aim will be to help domestic agriculture, encourage private trade and remove price distortions, at the same time as ensuring that families in need are properly safeguarded. The details have yet to be determined, and are expected to be followed up by the Iraqi Transitional Government after the forthcoming elections. DFID supports the reform in principle. DFID staff and advisers will continue to maintain contact with the Iraqi authorities, and with interested international organisations including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the World Food Programme, to ensure that the interests of poor and vulnerable families in Iraq are protected.

Mauritania

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment his Department has made of the impact on *(a)* food supplies and *(b)* the economic situation of individuals in southern Mauritania of the locust invasion of 2004; and if he will make a statement; [210338]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian situation in (i) Mauritania and (ii) southern Mauritania with reference to (A) the recurrent drought since 2001 and (B) the 2004 locust invasion; and if he will make a statement. [210339]

Hilary Benn: Mauritania is poor and often short of its food staples. A high proportion of the population relies on agricultural production to satisfy its food and income needs. During prolonged drought, communities may go hungry through poor yields or lack of recourse to alternative sources of income. In 2004 Mauritania was badly affected by the worst invasion of locusts in West Africa for 15 years. Millet and legumes suffered serious damage; sorghum and rice were less affected. Access to food is already posing problems for many households, both rural and urban, which are directly or indirectly affected by the crisis. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) estimates that 2004 production will only amount to 64 per cent. of the 5-year average. More food imports, including food aid, may be required. DFID stands ready to contribute to urgent humanitarian needs in Mauritania, and other countries in West Africa.

DFID provided £1.5 million to the FAO's emergency international appeal for locust control and eradication operations in West Africa in 2004. UK funding assisted the immediate emergency control of swarms until December 2004. The European Commission is providing €23.5 million (£16.33 million, UK share about £3 million) to assist those countries worst affected. The FAO operations may need to be continued in northern Mauritania to counter remaining immature swarms gathered there, and also in the Mahgreb countries until the spring, to reduce the scale of potential re-infestation of the Sahel in summer 2005.

In 2002–03 DFID contributed £1 million to the World Food Programme's regional appeal, which covered five countries in the region, but was mainly focused on Mauritania where the drought situation was most severe. DFID also contributed £0.5 million to an Oxfam appeal focused on the most badly affected areas in the south of the country.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment his Department has made of the UN World Food Programme appeal on 17 January for assistance to Mauritania over the next three years; what plans his Department has made to respond to the appeal; what changes are planned for the budget to be allocated to Mauritania; and if he will make a statement; [210340]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the food-for-work projects envisaged by the UN World Food Progamme for the distribution of food aid in Mauritania; and if he will make a statement. [210341]

Hilary Benn: The UN World Food Programme (WFP) appeal for US$30.8 million for Mauritania issued on 17 January aims to provide food aid to 400,000 people in 33 of the most vulnerable communities until 2007. About 60 per cent. of the proposal is for creation of productive assets through food for work activities, the construction of small dams, and improving village water supplies. These activities may be useful, but DFID believes that the sustained developmental impact of food aid is limited. DFID stands ready to contribute to urgent humanitarian needs in Mauritania, and other countries in West Africa.

DFID does not have a bilateral development partnership with Mauritania, but does provide a significant amount through multilateral channels, mainly the EC programme, of which the UK share amounted to some £6 million in 2003. We have also provided humanitarian assistance in recent years in response to the severe drought and food shortages.

Millennium Development Goals

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of UK aid channelled through the EU was spent in each of the last five years on schemes designed to achieve the millennium development goals. [210309]

Hilary Benn: The European Commission (EC) does not collate and publish data linking expenditure to specific activities in support of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, in 2003, the EC adopted performance indicators based on the MDGs to measure progress in partner countries in receipt of EC development assistance.

In October 2004, the European Commission issued a report on the EC contribution to attaining the MDGs 2000–04. This report will inform the UN 2005 Millennium Review Summit in September 2005. The report does not make an attempt to attribute directly EC funds to MDG objectives, but does stress the importance that the EC gives to the MDGs and outlines further actions currently foreseen to promote their implementation.

The report appears on the Commission's website: http://www.europa.eu.int.comm/development/body/publications/desript/pub7_2_en.cfm.

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208623]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: On 1 January 2005, the Department for International Development (DFID) had two people on secondment from the private sector, as follows:

1. Jeff Delmon, seconded from Allen and Overy, working in the Water, Energy and Minerals team on using finance and private sector investment to meet the needs of the poor in water and sanitation.
2. Charles Lutyens, seconded from Rio Tinto plc, working in the International Financial Institutions Department on private sector policy issues.

St. Helena

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the availability of fresh water on the island of St. Helena. [210242]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A period of very dry weather led to increased demand on fresh water supplies in St. Helena during the recent holiday period. Within an area that is supplied by the Hutts Gate water reticulation system, this created a water shortage. Water bowsers were introduced for one day only, and a hosepipe ban was imposed in the area on 5 January 2005. Supplies are now sufficient to cope with demand. Water use restrictions have not been required in other areas of St. Helena.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he expects to make a decision on air access for the island of St. Helena; and if he will make a statement. [210245]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Options to maintain future access for St. Helena are under consideration.

Decisions will be taken, in consultation with the St. Helena Government, as soon as it is possible to do so.

Sudan

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much departmental funding is being spent in Sudan on the road verification contract implemented by the South African commercial company Mechem; how many mines have been found by *(a)* vehicle mounted detection systems, *(b)* dogs and *(c)* manual deminers working for Mechem; what width of either side of the centre line of the road is being cleared in accordance with the Mechem contract; and what width either side of the centre line of the road is required for the development agency GTZ to rebuild the road to the specifications recommended by the UN World Food Programme. [209615]

Hilary Benn: The total amount of DFID funding allocated to the MECHEM road clearance contract to date is £1 million.

58 anti-tank mines and 169 items of Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) have been found by the system, which comprises a combination of mechanical detection, dogs and manual demining. These three systems are used in an integrated manner and it is not possible to credit any one individual system as being responsible for locating mines and UXO.

The original project called for four metres of clearance either side of the centre line. Following a request from the World Food Programme (WFP), which has contracted a company, GTZ, to undertake a temporary rehabilitation on the road, it was agreed to extend clearance to 6 metres either side of the centre line.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's estimate is of the number of *(a)* refugees in Chad, *(b)* internally displaced persons in Darfur, *(c)* refugees in Chad receiving aid, *(d)* internally displaced persons receiving aid in Darfur, *(e)* civilians killed in fighting in Darfur since the beginning of 2005 and *(f)* civilians injured in fighting in Darfur since the beginning of 2005. [210336]

Hilary Benn: According to the December 2004 UN humanitarian profile 203,000 Sudanese refugees have fled to Eastern Chad and are registered in camps. The number of refugees living on the border area outside camps is estimated by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) at 15,000.

The UN estimates that over 1.66 million people have been internally displaced in Darfur. A further 530,000 people have been affected by the conflict and are in need of assistance; thus giving a total figure of 2.19 million.

According to the UNHCR, all 203,000 refugees in camps in Chad are in receipt of food and non-food assistance. Those residing outside camps are receiving some assistance from NGOs.

The UN estimated that 1.34 million of the conflict affected population in Darfur received food assistance. Shelter and non-food items were provided to 1.13 million internally displaced people.

There are no reliable figures of civilians killed or injured in 2005 available yet. We are expecting to gain a better understanding of the situation in the next few months when the World Health Organisation completes its next mortality survey.

Tsunami

Tony Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's medium and long-term plans are to assist in the reconstruction of countries hit by the tsunami. [210394]

Hilary Benn: In response to the tsunami disaster which followed the earthquake in South East Asia, the Department for International Development has committed £75 million towards the immediate and medium term needs. This assistance is being channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement, non-governmental organisations and by DFID direct action. Of this, £40 million has been pledged as the UK contribution to the UN flash appeal. Requests for support from non-governmental organisations are still being received and we are continuing our direct action in support of priority needs. We estimate that the combined value of these will be about £25 million. The balance is being provided through the Red Cross, local initiatives being considered by DFID country offices, and the Ministry of Defence to cover the marginal costs of their operation.

In addition to the £75 million already committed for immediate and medium term needs, DFID is preparing plans to support longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction. DFID's focus is expected to be on support to rebuilding livelihoods and services for poor people in affected countries. The governments concerned are currently completing needs assessments with the support of the World Bank and others, and DFID will consider how we can best channel our support once we have the completed assessments of need.

We will work to ensure that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable are taken into account throughout the process of rehabilitation.

It is clear that there needs to be an early warning system and more effective disaster response for the Indian Ocean and probably other areas too. The Association of South East Asian Nations has already committed to a system for their region, and the UK is ready to provide support and contribute to funding. Last week, DFID's parliamentary Under Secretary of State, attended the Kobe World Disaster Reduction Conference which discussed the setting up of a framework to achieve a global warning system covering all natural hazards, and all countries by June 2007.

Sir Archy Kirkwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he expects to announce the Government's plans for long-term assistance for the reconstruction of countries affected by the Asian earthquake and floods. [210404]

Hilary Benn: The governments affected are currently completing assessments of the longer-term rehabilitation and reconstruction needs with the support of the World Bank and other donors. We expect these to be ready in the next few weeks. DFID will make an announcement of plans for supporting the longer-term efforts—which will be additional to the £75 million already committed for immediate and medium-term needs—once we have a clear idea of the need, and of the delivery mechanisms preferred by the governments concerned. DFID will work to ensure that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable are taken into account throughout the process of rehabilitation. It will be important that the donor response is well co-ordinated. DFID will also work to ensure that the UN relief effort is sustained and that there is a smooth transition from the recovery phase to longer-term rehabilitation.

Water Privatisation

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the Government's policy is on whether to support within the EU the inclusion of a requirement for countries to privatise their water delivery under the terms of GATS. [210306]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's overall objective in the water sector is to ensure that poor people lead a healthier and more productive life by increasing their access to safe drinking water supplies.

It is for this reason that DFID believes that there is an important role for the private sector to play in helping meet these targets (and the Millennium Development Goals) through providing investment and sharing technical expertise and more efficient management practices.

The GATS negotiations are a request and offer process hence there is nothing under the GATS that compels countries to liberalise the water sector if it is not in their national interest. Governments remain free to, and should, regulate to address market failures and national policy objectives.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who signed Council Decision 2004/804/EC L356 volume 47 of 1 December on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe; where the signing took place; and whether sanctions were lifted to enable this procedure to take place. [207131]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

Mr. Gift Punungwe, the Zimbabwean ambassador in Brussels, signed Council Decision 2004/804/EC L356 volume 47 of 1 December on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe. EU sanctions were not lifted to enable this procedure to take place, and did not need to be lifted. Mr. Punungwe is not on the EU's visa ban list.

TRANSPORT

A15

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what requests for funding he has received from local authorities to *(a)* widen and *(b)* dual the A15 in Lincolnshire. [210424]

Charlotte Atkins: I have received no request for funding from local authorities to either *(a)* widen or *(b)* dual the A15 in Lincolnshire.

A3

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on negotiations between the Highways Agency and Balfour Beatty on the future of the A3 Hindhead Road Tunnel. [208758]

Mr. Darling: There have been no formal negotiations between the Highways Agency and Balfour Beatty on the future of the A3 Hindhead Road Tunnel. However, discussions have started on the programming and delivery of the scheme, following the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review announcement.

Dana Footbridge

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what improvements Network Rail plan to carry out to the Dana footbridge. [209723]

Mr. McNulty: This is an operational matter for Network Rail who will write to the hon. Member.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210321]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Clwyd, South constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–07 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

Responsibility for a number of transport functions has been devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. For example, it is the Assembly that provides funding to local authorities in Wales in support of their local transport plans.

Finally, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208041]

Charlotte Atkins: Information on regional distribution of staff is available in the Libraries of both Houses, and also at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/contents_forcivilservice_statistics_2003_report/index.asp.

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution.

Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2004.

Edinburgh-Paris Rail Link

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the viability of a direct rail link between Edinburgh and Paris. [209626]

Mr. McNulty: The Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions commissioned Arthur D. Little to make a comprehensive analysis of the costs and benefits of the options for Regional Eurostar services and their report, "Review of Regional Eurostar Services" was published on 17 February 2000. It concluded that there was not a positive economic business case for any of four options for direct regional services to Paris, including from Glasgow or Edinburgh. The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has reviewed the market for direct international regional services, including demand from Glasgow via Edinburgh and the east coast main line, and has concluded that in terms of likely demand the position has if anything worsened.

EU Presidency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's priorities for the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union will be; and if he will make a statement. [209559]

Mr. McNulty: The overall Transport Council agenda for 2005 is outlined within the Luxembourg-UK Annual Operating Programme (AOP), copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House.

Ongoing work includes; the Third Railway "package"; the framework for charging heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures; and the European satellite radio navigation system "Galileo". New legislative proposals may also be brought forward by the Commission, possibly including: airport slot allocation; extension of scope of the European Aviation Safety Agency; access to air transport for passengers with reduced mobility; and maritime safety proposals ("Erika III").

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, leads on the telecommunications and energy aspects of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council.

In the telecoms part it is expected that the e-Europe strategy up to 2010 will be taken forward and concluded, and that the future direction of the existing Universal Services Directive will be discussed. In the energy part of the TTE Council it is expected that the End Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive and the revised Energy Labelling Framework Directive will be taken forward, and any new proposals and communications put forward by the Commission ahead of the December TTE Council might be discussed.

The final agenda for the UK presidency cannot yet be decided. It will be determined to a large extent by the agenda we inherit from the current presidency, and when specific Commission proposals are published.

Eurostar Platforms

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will enable the Eurostar platforms at Waterloo Station to be made available to serve South West Trains passengers after April 2007; [209793]

(2) if he will provide a new separation system at Clapham Junction to enable commuter trains to gain access to the disused Eurostar platforms after April 2007. [209794]

Mr. McNulty: Officials are working with the Strategic Rail Authority on a review of the possible future uses of Waterloo International station and associated infrastructure after Eurostar transfers its operations to St. Pancras. An announcement will be made in due course.

Hazel Grove Bypass

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will make a decision on authorising a public inquiry into the route of the A555, Hazel Grove Bypass; and if he will make a statement. [210049]

Mr. Jamieson: The A523/A555 Poynton Bypass, A6 Stockport North/South Bypass and the A555 Manchester Airport Link Road West are included in the Stockport Development Plan and it will be for the local authorities to determine the priority and timetable to implement the schemes. Until the highway authority submits any statutory Orders to the Secretary of State for Transport for confirmation for the scheme(s) it is not possible to say whether Public Inquiries will be decided upon or, if that were to be so, when they would be.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list his Department's IT projects for each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205789]

Charlotte Atkins: The requested information has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207663]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided only relates from the year 2002–03 onwards.

The only pay television subscriptions the Department had during 2002–03 and 2003–04 were situated at its headquarters buildings in London where there were 30 NTL boxes providing access to satellite channels at a cost of £11,000 per year for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Rail Safety

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the safety of passengers who are *(a)* sitting and *(b)* standing in the event of (i) a rail crash and (ii) a derailment. [208509]

Mr. McNulty: A report by the Health and Safety Executive in 1999, entitled 'Implications of overcrowding on railways', concluded that whether a passenger on a train involved in an incident is sitting or standing makes little difference to the overall severity of any injuries sustained. A copy of this report is available in the House Library.

As part of the follow-up to the Ufton Nervet derailment, the Rail Safety and Standards Board is looking at seatbelts on trains. At the same time, it is also researching passenger survivability issues.

Railways

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what he expects the total cost of the Crossrail project will be; what percentage of this money will be provided by the Government; what percentage will be provided by private finance; and what form the private finance will take. [209428]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement on Crossrail that the Secretary of State for Transport made on 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 23WS.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Passenger In Excess of Capacity levels were for fast and semi-fast services into London Paddington from *(a)* Maidenhead and *(b)* Twyford in the latest period for which figures are available, broken down by (i) morning and (ii) evening peak time. [210442]

Mr. McNulty: For trains calling at Maidenhead the autumn 2004 figures were 3.1 per cent. in the morning peak and 1.7 per cent. in the evening peak. For trains calling at Twyford the figures were 3.1 per cent. in the morning peak and 0.8 per cent. in the evening peak.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Passenger In Excess of Capacity levels for commuter journeys into London Paddington were in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by (i) morning and (ii) evening peak time. [210443]

Mr. McNulty: The autumn 2004 figures for First Great Western Link were 2.5 per cent. in the morning peak, 1.5 per cent. in the evening peak, and 2.1 per cent. for both peaks combined. This compares with the contractual thresholds of 4.5 per cent. for either peak in isolation or 3 per cent. for both peaks combined. First Great Western are not subject to PIXC.

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether links to and from the Tees Valley was a criterion in the recent East Coast Mainline franchise bid; and if he will make a statement. [210615]

Mr. McNulty: Services to the Tees Valley from the East Coast Main Line will continue to be provided at Darlington by Northern Rail The 'base case' specification (present service levels with minor alterations) contained within the Invitation to Tender for the new InterCity East Coast franchise does not contain any requirement to offer direct services to the Tees Valley.

Road Accidents

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has commissioned on the survival rates of drivers and passengers in different types and makes of vehicle in each type of road accident. [210679]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department has no research on the survival rates of drivers and passengers in different types and makes of vehicle in each type of road accident. Nor has the Department recently commissioned any research into this. Estimates have been produced for the risk of driver injury in popular models of car if they are involved in a two-car injury accident. A report on the study is published on the DfT website.

Speed Restrictions

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what speed restrictions may be imposed on vehicles and bicycles using by-ways open to all traffic. [210448]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Local highway authorities are responsible for setting local speed limits on their roads, depending on local needs. This includes any by-ways that may be considered part of the public highway. They can introduce speed limits from 20 mph to 60 mph without the need for consent from the Secretary of State. Speed limits below 20 mph would require consent from the Secretary of State.

Telephone Usage

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many non-geographic 0870 telephone numbers are in use by his Department; and what services can be accessed by calling each of them. [205831]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport headquarters do not have any 0870 telephone numbers in use.

VOSA have two 0870 numbers in use and DVLA have 14.

Transport Industry Support

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on Government support for the transport industry in the last financial year. [210904]

Charlotte Atkins: The Government's strategy for transport was set out in the White Paper, "The Future of Transport", published in July 2004. At the end of the financial year the Department will be publishing its Annual Report which will set out what financial and other support has been provided for transport during 2004–05.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Angela Cannings Case

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether cases similar to the Angela Cannings case are subject to non-judicial investigations. [210002]

Paul Goggins: There are currently no other cases, similar to that of Angela Cannings, being considered for eligibility for compensation.

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reasons were for his decision not to offer financial compensation to Mrs. Angela Cannings for wrongful conviction and imprisonment. [210003]

Paul Goggins: Angela Cannings has not been awarded a payment of compensation for her wrongful conviction, as she did not meet the criteria of section 133 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 for a statutory payment of compensation for her wrongful conviction. Nor did she meet the criteria for an ex-gratia payment of compensation under the terms of the then Home Secretary's statement to the House of Commons on 29 November 1985, *Official Report*, columns 691–92.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work of crime and disorder reduction partnerships in aiding co-ordination between different agencies in tackling housing-related antisocial behaviour. [204537]

Ms Blears: The Government recognises that partnership working at a local level is the key to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour effectively. The TOGETHER campaign, which targets a wide range of practitioners, including social landlords, is about ensuring that all agencies work together in delivering effective interventions.

We are supporting both social landlords and other agencies in identifying and delivering local solutions to local problems by working together within the framework that Crime and Disorder Partnerships provide.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in *(a)* West Derbyshire Constituency and *(b)* Derbyshire since their introduction. [207456]

Ms Blears: Anti-social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. From commencement, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), the Home Office has been notified of 36 ASBOs issued within Derbyshire. Of these, three orders were issued, where restrictions have been imposed in Amber Valley borough council area, and six where restrictions have been imposed in Derbyshire Dales district council area (parts of which make up the West Derbyshire constituency).

Data up to 30 September 2004 will be available shortly.

Asylum Seekers

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have been removed to Zimbabwe since 16 November 2004. [210514]

Mr. Browne: In the period 16 November to 31 December 2004, inclusive, 40 asylum applicants were removed to Zimbabwe from the UK. This includes persons who left the UK under assisted voluntary return schemes organised by the International Organisation for Migration, and those persons who departed voluntarily after enforcement action had been initiated.

This information has not been quality assured and should be treated as provisional management information only.

National Statistics on the number and nationality of asylum applicants removed from the UK during the final quarter of 2004 will be published on the Home Office website on 22 February 2005 www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria his officials use to *(a)* assess and *(b)* substantiate accounts of torture and political persecution given by Zimbabwean asylum seekers. [210774]

Mr. Browne: Asylum caseworkers consider the applicant's written and oral evidence in the light of the available sources of information about the country situation and particular incidents, taking account also of any medical evidence of torture, before deciding whether the individual has a well-founded fear of persecution and should be recognised as a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Convention.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will chair the community liaison group for the accommodation centre for asylum-seekers in Bicester; and whether the chair will be elected. [210889]

Mr. Browne: The chair has not yet been appointed. It is expected that the chair will be selected by the members of the group.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will appoint the independent Minister of Accommodation Centres for asylum seekers. [210987]

Mr. Browne: We intend to ensure that the monitor is appointed in good time for him or her to be able to monitor the operation of accommodation centres from the date at which the first centre is open.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will appoint the community liaison manager for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester; to whom the community liaison manager will be answerable to; and by whom they will be paid. [210988]

Mr. Browne: GSL (UK) Ltd. will appoint a community liaison manager who will deal with local enquiries during the construction phase. He or she will be answerable to the Home Office and paid by GSL (UK) Ltd.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the contractors will be represented on the community liaison group of the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [210989]

Mr. Browne: Yes. The contractor will both establish and be represented on the group.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what grade his Department will be represented on the community liaison group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [210990]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office will be represented by a deputy director or assistant director of the UK Immigration Service.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation there will be for elected councillors from *(a)* the councils of (i) Ambros, (ii) Arncott, (iii) Blackthorn and (iv) Piddington, *(b)* Bicester town council, *(c)* Cherwell district council and *(d)* Oxfordshire county council of the Community Liaison Group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [210991]

Mr. Browne: Representation on the community liaison group has not yet been decided; GSL (UK) Ltd. is actively seeking interest.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* clergy, *(b)* voluntary organisations, *(c)* residents and *(d)* local service providers will be included in the membership of the Community Liaison Group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester; and how they will be chosen. [210992]

Mr. Browne: Representation on the community liaison group has not yet been decided; GSL (UK) Ltd. is actively seeking interest.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will determine who the key people from the local community are for inclusion in the Community Liaison Group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [210993]

Mr. Browne: GSL (UK) Ltd. will invite representation from the local community.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will provide the secretariat for the Community Liaison Group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester. [210994]

Mr. Browne: The secretariat will be provided by GSL (UK) Ltd.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the annual budget will be of the Community Liaison Group for the accommodation centre for asylum seekers at Bicester; and who will provide the funding for the group. [210995]

Mr. Browne: The administrative costs are expected to be minimal. The funding will be provided by GSL (UK) Ltd.

Begging

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what consultation he has had with beggars in drawing up measures to tackle the problem of begging; [206583]

(2) how the Department measures the effectiveness of the use of powers to deal with begging; [206588]

(3) if he will make a statement on the measures which are in place to deal with the problem of begging; [206591]

(4) if he will make a statement on the alternatives to using the criminal justice system to tackle the problem of begging. [206592]

Ms Blears: We need to ensure that we address the underlying causes of those who beg. If we help those who beg because of drug use to get access to effective treatment we help them, help communities and help those intimidated by begging. Better use of enforcement powers and alternative giving schemes will help to address the underlying and immediate problems.

Begging is already a criminal offence, by making the offence of begging recordable the offender's details will be entered on the police national computer and there are powers to enable the offender to be finger-printed. This enables the police to identify repeat offenders and the courts will be able to issue community sentences, rather than fines, for those convicted a fourth time for an offence. This may include drug treatment. Since the end of July this year, begging has been included as a trigger offence under the Criminal Justice Interventions Programme. This will mean that those charged with begging will be drug tested and will enhance their opportunities for the underlying causes of their behaviour to be addressed and to route out repeat offending by offering treatment.

Members of the public often find begging intimidating. A MORI survey carried out in August 2003 for the Antisocial Behaviour Unit at the Home Office found that two thirds of respondents resent being approached by those who beg and over half will not use a cash point if someone is begging near it.

The Antisocial Behaviour Unit at the Home Office are working with five areas around the country: Brighton, Bristol, Camden, Westminster and Leeds to tackle begging.

The approach developed in these areas involves a 'twin track' approach of enforcement and support; addressing the underlying causes of begging such as drugs as well as taking enforcement action when people don't heed advice or offers of support.

Initial findings from the trailblazing areas indicate a reduction in begging and positive outcomes for former beggars. More detailed findings from these areas will emerge in March 2006.

Car Theft

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many car thefts there were in each London borough in *(a)* each year since 2001 and *(b)* each month to date in 2004. [205116]

Ms Blears: The information requested has been supplied by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis and is contained in the following table.

Recorded offences of theft of a motor vehicle by London borough

Number of offences

Area	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Barking and Dagenham	1,717	1,538	1,486
Barnet	1,537	1,698	1,751
Bexley	1,844	1,515	1,407
Brent	1,591	1,625	1,941
Bromley	2,086	2,239	1,950
Camden	2,206	1,974	1,710
Croydon	2,531	2,419	2,148
Ealing	2,670	2,527	2,286
Enfield	2,160	1,988	2,032
Greenwich	2,570	2,433	2,289
Hackney	2,861	2,616	2,429
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,257	1,133	1,114
Haringey	2,853	2,412	2,301
Harrow	753	998	857
Havering	1,903	1,684	1,710
Heathrow airport	45	43	59
Hillingdon	1,833	1,707	1,570
Hounslow	1,432	1,562	1,402
Islington	2,651	2,330	2,232
Kensington and Chelsea	1,197	1,094	1,008
Kingston upon Thames	400	419	448
Lambeth	2,995	2,806	2,305
Lewisham	1,996	2,118	2,152
Merton	1,033	905	999
Newham	3,944	3,617	3,135
Redbridge	2,598	2,093	1,872
Richmond upon Thames	608	723	505
Southwark	2,674	2,811	2,705
Sutton	881	831	885
Tower Hamlets	2,309	2,214	2,093
Waltham Forest	2,010	2,254	1,995
Wandsworth	1,965	1,818	1,367
Westminster	1,408	1,482	1,390

	2004				
	January	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*
Barking and Dagenham	130	140	140	139	142
Barnet	137	143	143	149	145
Bexley	139	141	138	99	92
Brent	139	158	154	128	154
Bromley	176	146	182	136	154
Camden	103	101	110	124	139
Croydon	230	251	222	207	176
Ealing	195	197	211	188	218
Enfield	179	169	183	197	187
Greenwich	223	189	171	194	199
Hackney	195	201	220	173	175
Hammersmith and Fulham	61	90	93	83	90
Haringey	202	212	222	200	202
Harrow	77	50	60	78	75
Havering	123	138	130	150	171
Heathrow airport	3	2	3	1	3
Hillingdon	146	141	166	134	107
Hounslow	131	122	145	129	118
Islington	131	116	149	111	128
Kensington and Chelsea	97	100	98	86	81
Kingston upon Thames	50	50	41	33	36
Lambeth	178	138	161	141	124
Lewisham	204	202	178	163	119
Merton	72	79	77	73	90
Newham	190	188	173	189	183
Redbridge	174	173	189	140	157
Richmond upon Thames	34	36	38	48	45
Southwark	279	237	235	190	198
Sutton	88	75	83	62	72
Tower Hamlets	160	181	190	193	171
Waltham Forest	162	189	145	146	153
Wandsworth	131	115	127	138	120
Westminster	108	86	103	87	102

	2004				
	June	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*
Barking and Dagenham	145	128	103	140	155
Barnet	158	175	165	192	243
Bexley	95	83	83	83	87
Brent	150	160	139	122	175
Bromley	123	119	121	156	144
Camden	104	97	118	109	135
Croydon	167	175	161	148	191
Ealing	166	204	232	218	276
Enfield	158	150	112	164	214
Greenwich	152	144	144	176	178
Hackney	150	131	137	219	198
Hammersmith and Fulham	88	92	72	81	81
Haringey	180	193	161	140	195
Harrow	51	56	50	69	71
Havering	143	105	121	124	126
Heathrow airport	1	3	2	2	4
Hillingdon	115	133	143	162	123
Hounslow	128	123	136	155	146
Islington	130	128	110	127	128
Kensington and Chelsea	90	77	79	73	98
Kingston upon Thames	46	44	38	39	29
Lambeth	150	131	171	175	158
Lewisham	153	121	176	179	151
Merton	76	65	79	65	71
Newham	183	169	171	197	193
Redbridge	150	128	133	147	165
Richmond upon Thames	32	46	38	38	41
Southwark	227	198	191	196	224
Sutton	66	55	67	62	92
Tower Hamlets	160	156	171	172	192
Waltham Forest	120	115	131	161	143
Wandsworth	125	120	127	125	103
Westminster	106	109	108	105	86

Community Support Officers

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the 20,000 community support officers that the Government have proposed to recruit by 2008, referred to in the HMIC Annual Report 2003–04, are to be posted in Merseyside. [208993]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The number of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in Merseyside at the end of September 2004 was 82. On 24 November I announced funding under the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund (NPF) to enable Merseyside to recruit an additional 85 CSOs by the end of March. Details of the next phase of the NPF, for 2006–07 and 2007–08, will be announced later this year.

Crime

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Department has to denote business crime as a separate category within its reporting of criminal activity. [205532]

Ms Blears: The Home Office currently publishes annual total crime statistics recorded by the police in England and Wales for the following offences specifically relating to business crime; robbery of business property, theft by an employee, theft from shops and theft of an automatic machine or meter. The most recent figures are available in Statistical Bulletin 10/04 "Crime in England and Wales 2003–04" at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0304.html.

However, we recognise that these figures provide a limited picture of the true nature of crimes experienced by the business sector. We are also aware that businesses do not report every incidence of crime for a variety of reasons.

Bearing this in mind, on 26 November, the Home Office also published the initial findings of the 2002 Commercial Victimisation Survey. This provided further information on the actual levels of business crime as well as an indication of the proportion of businesses which report the crimes that they suffer.

The Home Office Business Crime Team is also looking at how current information on business crime, including retail crime, can be enhanced, in particular, whether it is feasible to identify crimes against businesses in police recorded crime statistics through a pilot with South Wales.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many alcohol-related violent offences have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208591]

Ms Blears: From the information collected on recorded crime and court proceedings, it is not possible to identify those violent offences which are alcohol-related. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in either data series.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases of domestic violence have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208592]

Ms Blears: From the information collected on recorded crime and court proceedings, it is not possible to identify cases of domestic violence. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in either data series.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many youth crime offences have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208595]

Ms Blears: Information is not collected centrally on the number of recorded offences involving youths. The reason for this is that the recorded crime series deals purely with offences and does not collect any details on the offender.

Statistics on the number of juvenile defendants proceeded against and found guilty in the Essex police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area are given in the table. Court proceedings data is published on a calendar year basis. Data for 2004 will not be available until the autumn.

Number of juvenile defendants aged 10–17 proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for all offences, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Juveniles (all offences)	
	Proceeded against	Found guilty[2]
Essex police force area		
1997	3,232	2,201
1998	3,366	2,305
1999	3,330	2,239
2000	3,483	2,275
2001	3,696	2,540
2002	3,234	2,230
2003	2,977	2,086
South East Essex petty sessional area[3]		
1997	791	534
1998	864	553
1999	851	538
2000	616	417
2001	764	554
2002	680	463
2003	595	419

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] For South East Essex PSA the guilty figures include those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court.

[3] Covers Southend and includes some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of internet crime have been reported to *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; and how many reports led to a (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [208640]

Ms Blears: From the information collected on recorded crime and court proceedings, it is not possible to identify internet crime offences. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in either data series.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on crime in retail stores; and if he will make a statement. [205372]

Ms Blears: The Government takes crimes against the business community very seriously and is taking positive action to tackle retail crime and investigate the levels of crime that retailers suffer.

A commercial victimisation survey was carried out in 2002 which covered the incidence and cost of crime suffered by retailers in the preceding 12 months. The survey showed that the level of crime against retailers was lower than in 1993.

As part of the £15 million programme to support retailers in deprived areas, a development and practice report has been published to highlight initial results and best practice. A full evaluation of the programme will be published next year.

The Government Office for London are working with the metropolitan police to conduct a study of crime experienced by Black and minority ethnic businesses in London. This will include retail stores and results of this study are expected to be published next year.

Where reports have been published, they are available on the Home Office Website.

A number of other annual surveys carried out by trade organisations, such as the British Retail Consortium and the British Chambers of Commerce, provide helpful information about the levels of crimes experienced by their members.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the clear up rate for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* car theft and *(c)* possession of illegal drugs was in Southend in each of the last five years. [207632]

Ms Blears: The available information relates to offences cleared up in the Southend Basic Command Unit and is given in the table.

Information on the clear up rate for possession of drug offences is not available prior to 2001–02.

Table 1: Clear up rates in the Southend basic command unit—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Percentage

Period	Burglary in a dwelling	Theft of a vehicle	Possession of drugs
1999–2000	18	19	n/a
2000–01	21	18	n/a
2001–02	20	24	96

n/a = not available.

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Clear up rates in the Southend basic command unit—2002–03 and 2003–04

Percentage

Period	Burglary in a dwelling	Theft of a vehicle	Possession of drugs
2002–03	15	15	92
2003–04	13	16	100

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Crispen Kulinji

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will lift the certificate of fast tracking in respect of the case of Mr. Crispen Kulinji, appeal reference AS/18370/2004; if he will arrange for Mr. Kulinji to have access to experienced competent legal advice; what information is available to the department regarding abduction and torture, in respect of Mr. Kulinji; if he will arrange for Mr. Kulinji's release from the holding centre; and if he will grant permission for Mr. Kulinji to remain in this country. [201911]

Mr. Browne: Information on individual cases is confidential and cannot be divulged without the express consent of the individual concerned.

Custodial Sentences

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged 15 to 17 received custodial sentences in each year since 1997. [209913]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is contained in the following table.

Persons aged 15 to 17 sentenced to immediate custody in England and Wales, 1997–2003

	Males	Females	Total
1997	6,651	302	6,953
1998	6,695	331	7,026
1999	6,949	388	7,337
2000	6,355	409	6,764
2001	6,418	398	6,816
2002	6,224	461	6,685
2003	5,223	355	5,578

Statistics for 2004 will be published in the autumn.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged 15 to 17 sentenced in each year since 1997 served their sentences more than 50 miles from their parents' homes. [209914]

Paul Goggins: The available information is in the following table. The figures were supplied by the Youth Justice Board and relate to persons placed more than 50 miles from their recorded home address. Information is not available for the years 1997–99.

All sentenced 15 to 17-year olds more than 50 miles from home 2000[1]–04

	Year admitted				
Age	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Gender (female):					
15	39	83	56	47	76
16	42	71	73	71	88
17	41	72	69	65	72
Total	122	226	198	183	236
Gender (male):					
15	277	405	274	253	263
16	437	610	437	349	427
17	656	950	626	524	627
Total	1370	1965	1337	1126	1317
Grand Total	1492	2191	1535	1309	1553

[1] data for 2000 is for 1 April to 31 December only.

Departmental Risk Assessments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has conducted a risk assessment of *(a)* the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, *(b)* the timing of the introduction of the National Offender Management Service and *(c)* the reorganisation of the courts. [209650]

Paul Goggins: Risk assessments have been carried out on implementation of Criminal Justice Act 2003 (CJA) and the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Change Programme. They considered the risks to the programme posed by a variety of factors, including timing and considered the likelihood and consequences of any such risks materialising. The resulting risk registers also detail the actions required to ensure that the consequences of any risk is minimised. These actions are being taken forward by the appropriate Directors. Risk management is supported by the NOMS Programme Office and overseen by the NOMS Programme and Executive Board. These feed into wider Home Office risk management procedures.

A Risk Assessment on the re-organisation of the courts has been carried out by the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). The DCA established the Unified Courts Administration Programme (UCAP) to implement the re-organisation of the courts and to manage associated risks at area and regional levels. Risk registers are considered on a continuous review basis, and appropriate actions taken, by Directors at all levels of the organisation. Risk management is overseen, on behalf of the DCA, by UCAP and its Transitional Management Group.

Erkin Guney

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Scotland Yard's Anti-Corruption Squad's investigation into the circumstances leading to the wrongful conviction of Erkin Guney; when the investigation is expected to be concluded; when the results are expected to be presented to the Crown Prosecution Service; when Mr. Guney will be advised of progress; and if he will make a statement. [205533]

Ms Blears: Erkin Guney was investigated and convicted on 23 July 1996 for possession of heroin with intent to supply and illegal possession of a firearm and ammunition. He received a 14 year prison sentence. Mr. Guney appealed three times against conviction and, on his third attempt in 2003, his appeal was upheld; grounds of an unsafe conviction were cited.

I am advised by the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) that on 23 July 2003 Mr. Guney made a complaint against the police for failing to investigate threats to kill him and for acting dishonestly in gathering information that led to his arrest and prosecution. The MPS referred the complaint to the Police Complaints Authority (PCA) who agreed to supervise an MPS investigation into that complaint. The IPCC took over the supervision of the case on 1 April 2004 from the PCA.

The investigation is continuing but, given the length it has been running, the IPCC has requested that the Investigating Officer's final report be completed by mid-February. On receipt of the report, the IPCC will review the case and, if it is satisfied with the conduct of the investigation, the investigation will be closed.

On conclusion of the investigation, if the report indicates a criminal offence may have been committed, a copy of the report will be sent to the Crown Prosecution Service.

The IPCC wrote to the complainant's solicitors on 14 January 2005 with an update on the current position and will continue to report progress to Mr. Guney until the matter is concluded.

Essex Police (Court Attendance)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many days working at usual duties were lost in each year since 1997 due to police officers in the Essex Constabulary attending court cases; and if he will make a statement. [207752]

Ms Blears: Information on the number of working days Essex police officers spent attending court cases each year since 1997 has not been collected.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the offences for which fixed penalty notices can be issued by *(a)* police constables and *(b)* police community support officers. [208780]

Ms Blears: Police officers can issue fixed penalty notices under the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 for around 150 different offences which are listed in Schedule 3 to the Act. In addition the following offences have been added to the scheme since September 2000:

No MOT contrary to s47 of the Road Traffic Act 1988; No insurance contrary to s143 of the Road Traffic Act 1988;

Failure to supply details necessary to identify an offending driver contrary to s172 of the Road Traffic Act 1988; Overtaking a stationary or moving vehicle in the controlled area of a toucan crossing contrary to Regulation 28 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD); Stopping in the controlled area of a toucan crossing contrary to Regulation 27 of the TSRGD; Failing to wear prescribed types of authorised eye protectors when driving or riding a motor bicycle contrary contrary to the Motor Cycles (eye Protectors) Regulations 1999.

The police also have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for disorder as provided for in the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001. The table lists the offences currently included in the scheme.

Community support officers have the power of a constable to issue penalty notices for disorder except for the offences of theft and littering. In addition they have the power of a constable to issue fixed penalty notices for the offence of riding on a footway under s72 of the Highway Act.

They also have the power of an authorised officer of a local authority to issue fixed penalty notices for an offence of dog fouling under s4 of the Dog (Fouling of Land) Act 1996, for littering under s88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and for offences of fly posting or graffiti under s43 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Community support officers can issue road traffic fixed penalty notices only where they have additionally been designated by the Chief Constable as traffic wardens.

The police and community support officers also have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for truancy, although these notices are normally issued by education welfare officers.

Penalty Notice for Disorder Scheme: List of Penalty Offences

Act	*Description*
S 5, Criminal Law Act 1967	Wasting police time, giving false report.
S1 27(2) of the Communications Act 2003	Use of a public electronic communications network in order to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety
(England only) S49 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority.
S 31, Fire Services Act 1947	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a fire brigade
S5, Public Order Act 1986	Causing, harassment, alarm or distress.
S80, Explosives Act 1875	Throwing fireworks.
S91, Criminal Justice Act 1967	Drunk & disorderly.
s169A of the Licensing Act 1964	Sell alcohol to person under 18.
s169C(2)of the Licensing Act 1964	Purchase in licensed-premises of alcohol for person under 18.
s169C(3)of the Licensing Act 1964	Purchase of alcohol for consumption in a bar in licensed premises for person under 18.
s169F of the Licensing Act 1964	Delivery of alcohol to person under 18 or allowing such delivery.
s1 (1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971	Destroying or damaging property (under £500).
s1 of the Theft Act 1968	Theft (retail under 200)*
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Breach of fireworks curfew.
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Possession of a category 4 firework.
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework
S55, British Transport Commission Act 1949	Trespassing on a railway.
S56, British Transport Commission Act 1949	Throwing stones at a train.

Penalty Notice for Disorder Scheme: List of Penalty Offences

Act	*Description*
S12, Licensing Act 1872	Drunk in highway.
S12, Criminal Justice & Police Act 2001	Consume alcohol in designated public place, contrary to requirement by constable not to do so.
S87(1)and(5)of the Environmental Protection Act 1990	Depositing and leaving litter*.
169E(1)of the Licensing Act 1964	Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in licensed premises.
169E(2)of the Licensing Act 1964	Allowing consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in a bar in licensed premises.

Hunting Ban

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice he has given to the Association of Chief Police Officers in response to the request for further clarification of the legal position on enforcing the ban on hunting with dogs; and if he will make a statement. [208211]

Ms Blears: I have had discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on the enforcement on the ban on hunting with dogs. It is for the police to enforce the ban on hunting with dogs, when the Hunting Act comes into force. ACPO are producing guidance to all forces on the enforcement of the Act.

Identity Cards and Passports

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the outcome was of the consultation with stakeholders on which services should be linked to identity cards and whether there should be unique personal numbers across public services. [210006]

Mr. Browne: The consultation on the draft Identity Cards Bill asked for comments on the powers set out in the draft Bill making regulations on the use of a card. Various stakeholders commented as part of the draft Bill consultation and in broader discussions with the Identity Cards Programme on whether, and if so how, to link identity cards with access to services. The Government published a summary of findings from the consultation exercise in October 2004 (Cm 6358).

We did not consult at the time of the draft Bill however on whether there should be a unique personal number across public services.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 304W, on identity cards, what the value is of the contracts with each private sector company; and what work has been undertaken by *(a)* the private sector companies and *(b)* the Government bodies mentioned. [210169]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Programme has received management consultancy advice from the following organisations:

Organisation	*Details*	*Amount (£)*
Sirius consortium	Advice on feasibility and scheme costs.	78,724
SchlumbergerSema (Atos Origin)	Programme and Project Management advice.	56,000
PA Consulting Services Limited	Project Management consultancy.	27,200
Shreeveport Management Consultancy	Facilitation of Workshops and Core Proposition development.	43,250
Axon Group Plc.	Proposals relating to Human Resources.	28,766
Cornwell Management Consultants plc.	Assessment of potential Public sector delivery partners.	47,548
PA Consulting Services Limited	Provision of management consultancy for the development of the ID Card Scheme.	6,527,760 committed up to 1 January 2005

And from these Government bodies.

Organisation	*Details*
Communications Electronic Security Group (GCHQ)	Provision of advice on communications and general security.
Office of Government Commerce	Provision of general project management advice.
Partnerships UK plc	Procurement and Contracting advice relating to potential Public and Private sector interactions.
UK Passport Service	Provision of advice including work on costings and processes

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what coaching will be provided to citizens in how to present their biometrics for verification purposes when applying for an identity card; whether such coaching will form part of the identity card enrolment process; and what provision has been made for such coaching in the published costs for the scheme. [210157]

Mr. Browne: As part of the broader communications plan for the scheme, provision has been made to make the public aware of biometrics and how they will be recorded and used. The precise forms of the communication are to be determined.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 335W, on passports, what the figures are for adult passport *(a)* applications and *(b)* renewals. [210172]

Mr. Browne: Table 1 outlines UKPS' 10-year forecast of demand for adult new passports and adult passport renewals.

Table 1: Forecast of new and renewal adult passport applications

	Adult new passport applications	*Adult passport renewals*
2005	649,948	3,845,410
2006	615,779	4,314,519
2007	591,032	4,032,225
2008	565,403	3,849,008
2009	535,685	3,331,655
2010	536,686	3,586,329
2011	537,412	3,874,613
2012	538,176	3,765,436
2013	538,733	3,777,595
2014	538,748	4,227,314

These figures do not include applications for replacement lost or stolen passports or amendments to existing passports.

Immigration

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the latest average waiting time is for determination of applications for permanent leave to remain from persons who have in excess of four continuous years of being granted work permits, where the applicant is *(a)* from an EU member state and *(b)* not from an EU member state; and what the waiting times were in each of the previous six months. [204996]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 14 December 2004]:* The information requested is set out in the table.

All figures are for non-EU nationals, as EU nationals are not subject to work permit requirements. EU nationals are also not required to apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

The average processing times do not include applications dealt with on the same day in the Public Inquiry Office.

Number of application for indefinite leave to remain through four years work permit employment.

	2004					
	June	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*
Number of applications	1,465	1,435	1,700	1,765	1,715	1,610
Applications processed on the same day through the Public Inquiry Office (PEO)	365	370	360	385	350	115
Average processing time (calendar days) for applications not processed on same day in PEO	25	30	35	25	30	20

The figure for average processing times in recent months is not final because they do not include a number of the more complex cases that have yet to be completed.

The processing time is taken from the date that the application was received until the dispatch date.

These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers whose applications have not been resolved, are currently serving custodial sentences for crimes committed in the UK. [208947]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service central IT system does not record the immigration status of prisoners who are serving a custodial sentence. The information requested is not therefore available except by examination of individual case-files, at disproportionate cost.

Lincolnshire Police Force

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police stations in Lincolnshire in each year from 1997 to 2004. [204792]

Ms Blears: The management of the police estate and allocation of resources are matters for each police authority and the chief officer.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers there are in the Lincolnshire constabulary. [204795]

Ms Blears: On 30 September 2004, there were 44 community support officers (CSOs) deployed by Lincolnshire constabulary.

A further 37 CSO posts, all supported by Home Office funding, will be recruited by 31 March 2005.

Metropolitan Police Sports Ground

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether plans are in place to use the Metropolitan Police Sports Ground at Imber Court and related buildings and property for other purposes in certain circumstances; and if he will make a statement. [207600]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The management of the police estate and allocation of resources are matters for each Police Authority and the Chief Officer.

Mr. B. Mayo

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ask the Independent Police Complaints Commission to investigate the reasons for the delay in resolving the case of Mr. B. Mayo. [209174]

Ms Blears: Under the provisions of the Police Reform Act 2002, the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) can investigate a case only if it has been recorded by a police force and referred formally to the IPCC. The Secretary of State has no powers to intervene in that process.

However, it is a statutory function of the IPCC to determine if there are any lessons to be learned following an investigation and, if so, to make recommendations or give advice to the police service concerned or police services in general.

I understand that Mr. Nick Hardwick, Chair of the IPCC, will be providing a substantive response to the hon. Member's letter of 13 January 2005 to the IPCC, in which he sought his assistance in resolving this case.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the reasons are for the introduction of the concept of contestability within the National Offender Management Service. [201033]

Paul Goggins: Contestability is the principle that best quality and best value for money in the supervision, punishment and care of offenders will be achieved through ensuring that all appropriate services are opened up to competition with other providers. We want the most effective and efficient services for offenders both in prison and in the community whether these are provided by the public, private, voluntary or "not for profit" sectors. The concept of contestability is being introduced within National Offender Management Service (NOMS) following its successful application within the Prison Service.

Offender Assessment

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in rolling out the OASys offender assessment tool in *(a)* prisons and *(b)* probation; how many prisons have access to the system; when roll-out will be complete; and if he will make a statement. [201383]

Paul Goggins: OASys was rolled out, on schedule, to all prison establishments by early January 2005 and is already in use by all probation areas. Only those public sector establishments that hold juveniles do not have OASys; a separate assessment tool is used for prisoners under 18. We expect to complete the connection of the OASys IT systems between all probation areas and prisons by the autumn of 2005.

Penalty Enforcement Reform

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has for reform of the *(a)* enforcement and *(b)* administration of (i) criminal penalties and (ii) fixed penalty notices. [209484]

Paul Goggins: Custodial penalties are enforced and administered within the private and public sector prisons system. Community penalties are enforced and administered largely under arrangements made by local probation boards and with electronic monitoring contractors. Provisions in the Criminal Justice Act 2003 will introduce tougher requirements for the courts when dealing with breaches of community orders. The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill, currently before Parliament, includes provisions further to develop offender management within the National Offender Management Service. Measures include extended powers to direct the contracting out of probation services and the preparation of sentence plans for all offenders receiving custodial or community penalties.

Financial penalties are enforced by the magistrates courts. The Department for Constitutional Affairs' Enforcement Programme is delivering a wide programme of change aimed at improving the enforcement and administration of financial penalties. These include improving intelligence; a new legislative framework for enforcement provided by the Courts Act 2003; and taking the opportunity offered by the launch of Her Majesty's Courts Service to introduce more effective and efficient ways of working.

Most fixed penalty notices are enforced by prosecution or by the registration of a fine against a recipient who fails to pay the penalty or request a court hearing within the specified time. Registered fines are then enforced by the magistrates court in the same way as any other fine. For road traffic offences, consideration for prosecution follows when the endorsement of the statutory penalty points would result in disqualification. There are no plans to change this process.

Fixed penalty notices for road traffic offences and disorder are administered through a computer system which operates in both police forces and magistrates courts. There are no plans to change this arrangement, although the computer systems will need upgrading in the medium term. Certain changes to the fixed penalty system are proposed in the Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament. These are designed essentially to enable road traffic fixed penalty notices to be given to those who do not hold a GB driving licence and counterpart and to enable more effective enforcement against those who cannot prove an address in the UK.

Police

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to support measures to improve the performance of Northamptonshire Police; and if he will make a statement. [203765]

Ms Blears: The Police Standards Unit (PSU) has been working with Northamptonshire Police since the spring of 2004. This work has included a diagnostic phase which reviewed how the force manages burglary, vehicle and drug related crime. The review has also looked specifically at the use of forensic science and the custody processes in operation. The results of the diagnostic phase were a series of recommendations to enhance performance in each of the above areas, and these have been put to the force to consider for implementation.

In addition to this work, the force has completed a review of its structure and policing style and as a result of this has put into place the Northamptonshire Policing Model (NPM). This model restructures the force around different policing units to enable the force to deal more effectively with incident management and with community issues, crime investigations, and prisoner handling. The PSU is part-funding consultants who are working with the force to ensure that the NPM is implemented with minimum disruption, and that the focus on performance is vigorously maintained.

We are confident that the joint efforts of the PSU, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Northamptonshire Police will result in substantial improvements in performance.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of numbers of police officers in Wales are *(a)* community support officers, *(b)* reserve officers and *(c)* part-time officers. [208840]

Ms Blears: Community support officers (CSOs) are not police officers, but police staff for whom the chief officer of the force may designate certain limited powers.

The police service in England and Wales does not have a category of reserve police officers.

The total number of police officers in England in Wales is usually expressed in terms of full-time equivalent posts for which part-time posts are aggregated and not pure headcount (which, consequently, is always a higher figure). The full-time equivalent figure is used when announcing overall police officer numbers.

The full-time equivalent strength for 31 August 2004 for the four forces in Wales was 7,414. The most recent data available on part-time police officers is 31 March 2004, when the full-time equivalent strength was also 7,414 and the headcount figure was 7,545. There were 188 part-time police officers in post at that date; this is 2.5 per cent. of the 7,545 headcount figure.

In addition, there were 629 special constables on that date. At the end of September 2004, there were 130 CSOs in post in Wales. On 24 November I announced that funding was available for an additional 125 community support officers for the four Welsh police forces.

Police Authority Funding

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what additional funding is available to police authorities from central funds to implement *(a)* the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and *(b)* the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [199526]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Home Office, not police authorities, is responsible for implementation of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. Police authorities fund operations undertaken within the terms of the Act, as part of force activity within the force budget. Operational decisions are a matter for each Chief Constable.

For local and police authorities in England and Wales increases in Revenue Support Grant will cover the new burdens of meeting costs of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Police Methods

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what proportion of *(a)* rape and *(b)* murder investigations by (i) Cleveland police and (ii) other north eastern police forces a scene of crime officer was automatically despatched to the crime scene in the last period for which figures are available. [207498]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Police Numbers

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* police civilian staff each police authority in England and Wales has had in each year since 1995. [204794]

Ms Blears: The information requested is set out in the following tables.

Police officer strength, England and Wales, as at 31 March
(Full-time equivalent)

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Avon and Somerset	3,000	2,981	2,989	2,976	2,999
Bedfordshire	1,126	1,128	1,094	1,079	1,041
Cambridgeshire	1,261	1,238	1,302	1,291	1,274
Cheshire	1,932	1,998	2,046	2,042	2,071
Cleveland	1,438	1,420	1,459	1,483	1,416
Cumbria	1,167	1,115	1,144	1,164	1,126
Derbyshire	1,797	1,763	1,791	1,772	1,759
Devon and Cornwall	2,877	2,899	2,865	2,962	2,887
Dorset	1,288	1,263	1,284	1,310	1,279
Durham	1,353	1,401	1,461	1,515	1,568
Dyfed-Powys	976	991	1,005	1,002	1,026
Essex[1]	2,921	2,884	2,961	2,928	2,891
Gloucestershire	1,163	1,133	1,133	1,104	1,104
Greater Manchester	7,037	6,938	6,922	6,949	6,810
Gwent	997	1,044	1,243	1,233	1,247
Hampshire	3,256	3,347	3,452	3,490	3,473
Hertfordshire[1]	1,703	1,712	1,759	1,740	1,724
Humberside	2,029	2,041	2,045	2,021	1,974
Kent	3,117	3,120	3,260	3,251	3,201
Lancashire	3,212	3,171	3,247	3,257	3,245
Leicestershire	1,839	1,908	1,949	1,983	1,993
Lincolnshire	1,199	1,145	1,196	1,191	1,140
London, City of	885	869	859	825	778
Merseyside	4,659	4,411	4,230	4,216	4,211
Metropolitan Police[1]	27,480	27,343	26,677	26,094	26,073
Norfolk	1,395	1,401	1,432	1,430	1,381
North Wales	1,366	1,378	1,369	1,396	1,391
North Yorkshire	1,300	1,324	1,338	1,367	1,337
Northamptonshire	1,156	1,153	1,177	1,169	1,137
Northumbria	3,606	3,668	3,677	3,769	3,840
Nottinghamshire	2,319	2,318	2,323	2,323	2,225
South Wales	3,014	3,027	2,976	2,986	2,981
South Yorkshire	3,040	3,073	3,159	3,182	3,168
Staffordshire	2,231	2,209	2,211	2,292	2,238
Suffolk	1,191	1,138	1,180	1,186	1,190
Surrey[1]	1,676	1,644	1,620	1,608	1,662
Sussex	2,931	3,074	3,085	2,996	2,847
Thames Valley	3,854	3,674	3,695	3,776	3,748
Warwickshire	1,013	979	926	924	908
West Mercia	2,046	2,017	2,040	2,010	2,025
West Midlands	7,019	7,145	7,113	7,156	7,321
West Yorkshire	5,050	5,142	5,209	5,155	4,982
Wiltshire	1,261	1,218	1,154	1,156	1,151
TOTAL	125,180	124,844	125,051	124,756	123,841
Total England and Wales (inc secondments)	127,222	126,901	127,158	126,814	126,096

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2004 (31 August)*
Avon and Somerset	2,934	2,994	3,096	3,149	3,401	3,405
Bedfordshire	1,028	1,036	1,069	1,106	1,181	1,172
Cambridgeshire	1,237	1,296	1,362	1,384	1,400	1,409
Cheshire	2,011	2,002	2,059	2,119	2,177	2,145
Cleveland	1,404	1,407	1,461	1,582	1,687	1,616
Cumbria	1,084	1,048	1,100	1,140	1,222	1,231
Derbyshire	1,777	1,823	1,848	2,003	2,070	2,061

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2004 (31 August)*
Devon and Cornwall	2,841	2,934	3,053	3,202	3,283	3,319
Dorset	1,306	1,354	1,381	1,416	1,433	1,438
Durham	1,558	1,595	1,614	1,651	1,685	1,679
Dyfed-Powys	1,040	1,055	1,132	1,149	1,160	1,165
Essex[1]	2,806	2,897	2,946	2,989	3,098	3,106
Gloucestershire	1,114	1,173	1,183	1,227	1,284	1,261
Greater Manchester	6,795	6,909	7,217	7,343	8,042	8,061
Gwent	1,264	1,274	1,333	1,341	1,372	1,394
Hampshire	3,419	3,438	3,480	3,668	3,706	3,727
Hertfordshire[1]	1,767	1,922	1,825	1,957	2,086	2,124
Humberside	1,932	1,917	2,058	2,105	2,213	2,230
Kent	3,204	3,319	3,355	3,487	3,576	3,530
Lancashire	3,179	3,255	3,304	3,339	3,550	3,567
Leicestershire	1,993	2,032	2,100	2,114	2,277	2,257
Lincolnshire	1,115	1,202	1,198	1,221	1,228	1,211
London, City of	732	703	764	808	853	866
Merseyside	4,085	4,081	4,125	4,099	4,122	4,278
Metropolitan Police[1]	25,485	24,878	26,223	27,984	29,735	30,021
Norfolk	1,381	1,420	1,468	1,499	1,510	1,517
North Wales	1,403	1,444	1,506	1,539	1,603	1,591
North Yorkshire	1,283	1,305	1,417	1,444	1,529	1,535
Northamptonshire	1,117	1,157	1,214	1,210	1,239	1,263
Northumbria	3,788	3,857	3,929	3,943	4,040	4,056
Nottinghamshire	2,204	2,275	2,330	2,411	2,484	2,523
South Wales	2,926	3,154	3,222	3,239	3,279	3,264
South Yorkshire	3,163	3,197	3,199	3,183	3,279	3,292
Staffordshire	2,170	2,129	2,133	2,202	2,266	2,274
Suffolk	1,145	1,133	1,203	1,253	1,304	1,302
Surrey[1]	1,785	2,066	1,992	1,906	1,913	1,912
Sussex	2,822	2,855	2,893	2,989	3,039	3,062
Thames Valley	3,740	3,703	3,762	3,833	4,034	4,139
Warwickshire	900	926	969	997	1,008	995
West Mercia	1,887	1,951	2,018	2,256	2,355	2,349
West Midlands	7,194	7,423	7,681	7,751	7,887	8,039
West Yorkshire	4,822	4,815	4,889	5,029	5,275	5,370
Wiltshire	1,118	1,120	1,157	1,158	1,217	1,200
TOTAL	121,956	123,476	127,267	131,426	137,105	137,956
Total England and Wales (inc secondments)	124,170	125,682	129,603	133,366	139,200	139,728

[1] Boundary changes on 1 April 2000 between the Metropolitan Police (MPS), Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey reduced the strength of the MPS in 2000–01.

Note:

Officers on career breaks and maternity/paternity leave over 28 days are excluded.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers there are in each police authority in England and Wales. [204797]

Ms Blears: The number of community support officers (CSOs) on patrol in each police authority in England and Wales on 30 September 2004 is shown in the following table. I wrote to all hon. Members on 23 November 2004 setting out the number of additional posts we intended to fund from the first round of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund. This is an additional £50 million we announced in the summer to guarantee that the number of community support officers reaches at least 5,500 by 31 March 2005. We further intend that the number of CSOs should reach 24,000 by March 2008.

Number of Community Support Officers (CSOs), England and Wales

Police Authority	*CSOs on Patrol at 30 September 2004*
Avon and Somerset	75
Bedfordshire	27
Cambridgeshire	60
Cheshire	46
City of London	0
Cleveland	75
Cumbria	0
Derbyshire	0
Devon and Cornwall	59
Dorset	20
Durham	36
Dyfed-Powys	11
Essex	75
Gloucestershire	50
Greater Manchester	188
Gwent	47
Hampshire	0
Hertfordshire	70
Humberside	0
Kent	63
Lancashire	118
Leicestershire	57
Lincolnshire	44
Merseyside	82
Metropolitan	1,809
Norfolk	57
North Wales	8
North Yorkshire	49
Northamptonshire	23
Northumbria	51
Nottinghamshire	69
South Wales	64
South Yorkshire	56
Staffordshire	13
Suffolk	15
Surrey	75
Sussex	149
Thames Valley	7
Warwickshire	45
West Mercia	70
West Midlands	104
West Yorkshire	282
Wiltshire	20
Total	4,169

Claire Ward: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in Hertfordshire in *(a)* 1995 and *(b)* 2004; and if he will make a statement on the percentage change in funding of the police service during that period. [207569]

Ms Blears: On 31 March 1995 there were 1,703 police officers in the Hertfordshire Constabulary. The latest figure, for 31 August 2004, is 2,124 officers, an increase of 421, or 24.7 per cent.

The increase in officer numbers and funding for Hertfordshire Police Authority was affected by changes to the boundaries of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on 1 April 2000, when parts of the Metropolitan Police District were transferred to Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey. The effects of the boundary changes were incorporated into the police funding formula and the overall transfer was in terms of financial resources, not officers.

However, 183 MPS officers were seconded to Hertfordshire on 1 April 2000 for up to two years to assist with policing while Hertfordshire Constabulary arranged to recruit its own officers for the expanded force area.

General grants (comprised of Home Office principal Police Grant, Revenue Support Grant and redistributed business rates) to Hertfordshire Police Authority have increased by 45.4 per cent. between 1995–96 and 2004–05.

In addition to general Government grants, Hertfordshire Police Authority has also benefited from specific grants for targeted programmes, first introduced in 2000–01, such as the Crime Fighting Fund (CFF), to increase and maintain the number of police officers. Hertfordshire has had CFF funding to support the recruitment of 113 additional police officers.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time equivalent police officers are employed in the metropolitan police force; and what the figure was five years ago. [210315]

Ms Blears: At the end of August 2004 there were 30,021 police officers in the metropolitan police service, compared with 25,485 in March 2000. Following boundary changes on 1 April 2000 with Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey, the metropolitan police district was reduced in size and some resources were transferred to the other three forces. Metropolitan police service strength data prior to April 2000 is therefore not comparable with later data.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables are serving in the metropolitan police force. [210316]

Ms Blears: The metropolitan police service had 726 special constables serving at 31 December 2004.

Police Officers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers, excluding support staff and community support officers, were employed in each police authority in England and Wales in each year since 1996–97. [207963]

Ms Blears: The information is set out in the table.

Police officer strength, England and Wales, as at 31 March (full-time equivalent)

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2004 (31 August)*
Avon and Somerset	2,989	2,976	2,999	2,934	2,994	3,096	3,149	3,401	3,405
Bedfordshire	1,094	1,079	1,041	1,028	1,036	1,069	1,106	1,181	1,172
Cambridgeshire	1,302	1,291	1,274	1,237	1,296	1,362	1,384	1,400	1,409
Cheshire	2,046	2,042	2,071	2,011	2,002	2,059	2,119	2,177	2,145
Cleveland	1,459	1,483	1,416	1,404	1,407	1,461	1,582	1,687	1,616
Cumbria	1,144	1,164	1,126	1,084	1,048	1,100	1,140	1,222	1,231
Derbyshire	1,791	1,772	1,759	1,777	1,823	1,848	2,003	2,070	2,061
Devon and Cornwall	2,865	2,962	2,887	2,841	2,934	3,053	3,202	3,283	3,319
Dorset	1,284	1,310	1,279	1,306	1,354	1,381	1,416	1,433	1,438
Durham	1,461	1,515	1,568	1,558	1,595	1,614	1,651	1,685	1,679
Dyfed-Powys	1,005	1,002	1,026	1,040	1,055	1,132	1,149	1,160	1,165
Essex [1]	2,961	2,928	2,891	2,806	2,897	2,946	2,989	3,098	3,106
Gloucestershire	1,133	1,104	1,104	1,114	1,173	1,183	1,227	1,284	1,261
Greater Manchester	6,922	6,949	6,810	6,795	6,909	7,217	7,343	8,042	8,061
Gwent	1,243	1,233	1,247	1,264	1,274	1,333	1,341	1,372	1,394
Hampshire	3,452	3,490	3,473	3,419	3,438	3,480	3,668	3,706	3,727
Hertfordshire [1]	1,759	1,740	1,724	1,767	1,922	1,825	1,957	2,086	2,124
Humberside	2,045	2,021	1,974	1,932	1,917	2,058	2,105	2,213	2,230
Kent	3,260	3,251	3,201	3,204	3,319	3,355	3,487	3,576	3,530
Lancashire	3,247	3,257	3,245	3,179	3,255	3,304	3,339	3,550	3,567
Leicestershire	1,949	1,983	1,993	1,993	2,032	2,100	2,114	2,277	2,257
Lincolnshire	1,196	1,191	1,140	1,115	1,202	1,198	1,221	1,228	1,211
London, City of	859	825	778	732	703	764	808	853	866
Merseyside	4,230	4,216	4,211	4,085	4,081	4,125	4,099	4,122	4,278
Metropolitan police [1]	26,677	26,094	26,073	25,485	24,878	26,223	27,984	29,735	30,021
Norfolk	1,432	1,430	1,381	1,381	1,420	1,468	1,499	1,510	1,517
North Wales	1,369	1,396	1,391	1,403	1,444	1,506	1,539	1,603	1,591
North Yorkshire	1,338	1,367	1,337	1,283	1,305	1,417	1,444	1,529	1,535
Northamptonshire	1,177	1,169	1,137	1,117	1,157	1,214	1,210	1,239	1,263
Northumbria	3,677	3,769	3,840	3,788	3,857	3,929	3,943	4,040	4,056
Nottinghamshire	2,323	2,323	2,225	2,204	2,275	2,330	2,411	2,484	2,523
South Wales	2,976	2,986	2,981	2,926	3,154	3,222	3,239	3,279	3,264
South Yorkshire	3,159	3,182	3,168	3,163	3,197	3,199	3,183	3,279	3,292
Staffordshire	2,211	2,292	2,238	2,170	2,129	2,133	2,202	2,266	2,274
Suffolk	1,180	1,186	1,190	1,145	1,133	1,203	1,253	1,304	1,302
Surrey [1]	1,620	1,608	1,662	1,785	2,066	1,992	1,906	1,913	1,912
Sussex	3,085	2,996	2,847	2,822	2,855	2,893	2,989	3,039	3,062
Thames Valley	3,695	3,776	3,748	3,740	3,703	3,762	3,833	4,034	4,139
Warwickshire	926	924	908	900	926	969	997	1,008	995
West Mercia	2,040	2,010	2,025	1,887	1,951	2,018	2,256	2,355	2,349
West Midlands	7,113	7,156	7,321	7,194	7,423	7,681	7,751	7,887	8,039

Police officer strength, England and Wales, as at 31 March (full-time equivalent)

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2004 (31 August)*
West Yorkshire	5,209	5,155	4,982	4,822	4,815	4,889	5,029	5,275	5,370
Wiltshire	1,154	1,156	1,151	1,118	1,120	1,157	1,158	1,217	1,200
Total	125,051	124,756	123,841	121,956	123,476	127,267	131,426	137,105	137,956
Total England and Wales (including secondments)	127,158	126,814	126,096	124,170	125,682	129,603	133,366	139,200	139,728

[1] Boundary changes on 1 April 2000 between the Metropolitan police (MPS), Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey reduced the strength of the MPS in 2000–01.

Police Standards Unit

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the work that the Police Standards Unit has undertaken with Nottinghamshire police; and what estimate he has made of the cost of such work. [207341]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* The Police Standards Unit (PSU) has been working with Nottinghamshire police since the spring of 2003. Developed in close liaison with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, there is now a mature and comprehensive programme of work in place aimed at supporting the force to reduce and better investigate crime through delivering performance improvements in operational and organisational areas.

The key areas of PSU work with the force are on improving capacity for forensics, intelligence-led policing (with a particular focus on drugs and major crime), performance management, and on tackling persistent offenders. PSU is also working with the force on management of serious crime, sanction detections, and tackling violent crime.

In addition to the investment of time from PSU staff, the total cost of PSU's work with Nottinghamshire police to date has been £2.4million. This funding has been divided between provision of staff (including extra Scenes of Crime Officers and a drugs manager), infrastructure (e.g. provision of hardware) and consultancy support (e.g. on the force's performance management framework).

Nottinghamshire police have achieved significant reductions in crime during the time that PSU have been working with them. For example, according to the latest figures from the force, over the last 12 months the number of domestic burglaries has fallen by 23 per cent., robberies by 26 pre cent. and vehicle crimes by 15 per cent., when compared to the previous 12 months.

Police/Prison Service

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have occurred to the entry level fitness tests for the *(a)* Police Service and *(b)* Prison Service since 2000. [201857]

Paul Goggins: The Police Service introduced a national standard for Recruitment Fitness Testing in April 2002. Prior to this, different forces used different Fitness Tests and different standards applied. Officers are tested prior to recruitment and during probation.

1 April 2002—test consisted of:

Speed and Agility, 27 seconds

Grip Strength, 32 kgs

Dynamic strength, Dyno Machine—Push 34 kg/ Pull 35 kg

Endurance fitness i.e. Multi-stage shuttle run 1 Shuttle at level 8 (8/1)

1 July 2003—following research conducted by the Prison Service (as set out) and a conclusion that the speed/agility element may not be justified, interim adjustments were made to the test pending further research. These were:

Discontinuation of the speed/agility element

Change to the required standard for endurance fitness to level 5–4 shuttles (5/4).

2 August 2004—following further research and a decision to base the fitness requirement on the level of fitness needed for Officer Safety Training—the test was adjusted by:

Discontinuation of the grip strength element of the test

Currently, police recruits must demonstrate:

Endurance fitness to level 5/4

Dynamic strength—push 34kgs; pull 35 kgs

A working party set up by the Police Advisory Board for England and Wales is looking at the on-going health and fitness of serving officers and fitness levels for officers in specialist roles.

Prison Service

Her Majesty's Prison Service introduced a mandatory annual fitness test for all new Prison Officers joining the service after 2 April 2001. Prison Officers are required to pass this test annually for the rest of their discipline career in order to meet the Services health and safety requirements. Since its introduction there has been two changes to the test.

Change 1: The level of the Multi Stage Fitness Test (Bleep Test) was lowered to 5.4 from 6.5

The reason for the multistage fitness test change was based on advice taken from Loughborough University who said that the minimum level of VO2m for a Prison Officer was 34.7, which equated to level 6.5 on a 20-metre bleep test.

The Prison Service work to a 15-metre bleep test and it was proven by Roehampton University that the 15-metre course is harder than the 20-metre one. The minimum level of 34.7 VO2m on a 15-metre course is achieved at level 5.4, hence the change.

Although the level of the bleep test was lowered it is still measuring the same level of VO2m which is the minimum fitness level required of a Prison Officer joining the Prison Service after 2 April 2001.

Change 2 : The grip test which was lowered from 28kgf to 25kgf

The grip test was reduced due to the Prison Service changing its testing equipment with the original dynometer being was much more user friendly and suited a smaller hand. The change to the dyno-meters was made due to the high cost of repair (they had to be sent to America) as they worked on a hydraulic system that continually leaked.

The new dyno-meter disadvantaged Prison Officers with a small hand and so the grip test was lowered to 25kgf to accommodate this.

Policing

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were employed in the Dagenham constituency in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2004. [207158]

Ms Blears: Published information on the number of police officers in Basic Command Units (BCUs) has only been collected since March 2002 and is set out in the following table.

Barking and Dagenham operational command unit

As at 31 March	*Number of police officers*
2002	301
2003	360
2004	384

I am told by the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis that the Barking and Dagenham Operational Command Unit (OCU) had 411 police officers at the end of September 2004.

It is not possible to separately show the number of officers in the Dagenham parliamentary constituency from the rest of the BCU. The deployment of officers in Barking and Dagenham OCU is a matter for the borough commander.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to the police on recording attendances at disturbances in pubs and nightclubs. [207630]

Ms Blears: Guidance on crime recording was issued by the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) in 2002 in the form of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS). The aim of the Standard was to promote greater consistency between police forces in the recording of crime and to adopt a more victim oriented approach to crime recording. The police should record all reports of incidents, including attendance at disturbances in pubs and nightclubs, in accordance with the NCRS.

The Standard states that all reports of incidents, whether from victims or third parties and whether crime-related or not, will result in the registration of an incident report by the police. Such an incident will subsequently be recorded as a crime if, on the balance of probability:

(a) the circumstances as reported amount to a crime defined by law (the police will determine this, based on their knowledge of the law and counting rules); and

(b) there is no credible evidence to the contrary.

Prisons

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the reports on self-inflicted deaths in prisons completed by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman in the last 12 months. [200465]

Paul Goggins: In 2003–04, the Ombudsman completed reports on apparently self-inflicted deaths of prisoners in Her Majesty's Prison Styal and Her Majesty's Prison Wakefield. The completed reports on self-inflicted deaths since 1 April 2004 concern prisoners who died in Her Majesty's Prison Liverpool, Her Majesty's Prison Durham, Her Majesty's Prison Lewes, Her Majesty's Prison Holloway, Her Majesty's Prison Nottingham, Her Majesty's Prison New Hall and Her Majesty's Prison Woodhill.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances prison inmates are not required *(a)* to wear footwear and *(b)* to cut their toenails; and if he will make a statement. [207939]

Paul Goggins: There is no blanket requirement for prisoners to either wear footwear or cut their toenails. A rule or order requiring either will be imposed where there are good reasons for it. This will normally be where failure to wear footwear or cut toenails is assessed as presenting a risk to health and safety.

A prisoner who refuses to comply with a rule or order requiring the wearing of footwear or the cutting of toenails in circumstances where this presents a risk to health and safety may have to be excluded from certain areas or activities within the prison establishment. Their behaviour may also constitute an offence against prison discipline.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the intermediate estate in the Prison Service. [204477]

Paul Goggins: Intermittent Custody is one of the new sentences introduced by the 2003 Criminal Justice Act. It is designed to avoid some of the negative outcomes—loss of employment or accommodation, and family breakdown—which can accompany even relatively short periods of full-time custody. Pilots of intermittent custody began on 26 January 2004 at Kirkham Prison, in Lancashire, for male offenders and at Morton Hall Prison, in Lincolnshire, for females.

During the 49 weeks to 2 January a total of 147 intermittent custody orders were imposed. The early results—including a high level of compliance with the orders—are very encouraging and we have decided to extend intermittent custody beyond the existing pilot sites. Planning for that expansion is already under way.

The intermittent custody pilots are the subject of a detailed independent evaluation by a team from the Institute for Criminal Policy, based at King's College, London. Their final report will be completed in

December 2005, but any emerging findings will be incorporated into the planning for the expansion of intermittent custody during the course of this year.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what projections he has made of the number of inmates in future large prison developments in England and Wales. [208749]

Paul Goggins: A new 840 place prison, Her Majesty's Prison Peterborough, to hold both male and female prisoners in separate units will open in March 2005. The Government are also currently considering the purchase of additional sites. The specific capacity of any prisons subsequently built at these sites is a matter yet to be decided.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will summarise the guidance available for police forces regarding the interviewing of witnesses in historical sex abuse investigations [207324]

Ms Blears: Guidance for police on appropriate techniques for investigating allegations of historical child abuse is included in the 'Senior Investigating Officer's Handbook—the Investigation of Historical/Institutional Child Abuse' produced by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Guidance on interviewing vulnerable or intimidated witnesses (VIWs) is contained in 'Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings: Guidance for Vulnerable or Intimidated Witnesses, including Children' issued in January 2002. This guidance became operational in May 2002 when it superseded "Memorandum of Good Practice on Video Recorded Interviews with Child Witnesses for Criminal Proceedings". Victims in sexual offence proceedings are considered to be intimidated. Other witnesses in these cases—but not the accused—may also be treated as vulnerable or intimidated.

Achieving Best Evidence covers preparing and planning for interviews with VIWs, decisions about whether or not to conduct an interview and decisions about whether the interview should be video recorded or whether it would be more appropriate for a written statement to be taken. It covers the interviewing of such witnesses both for the purposes of making a video-recorded statement and also for taking a written statement, their preparation for court and any subsequent court appearance.

Other guidance includes: 'Guidance on the Recording of Interviews with Vulnerable and Significant (Key) Witnesses' issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers; and 'Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Inter-agency issues' issued jointly by the Home Office and Department of Health.

Sex Offenders

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a member of Her Majesty's Armed Forces convicted by a court martial of a sexual offence has his or her name placed on the sex offenders register. [209511]

Paul Goggins: Section 137 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 provides that the notification requirements of Part 2 of that Act (often known as the sex offenders register) apply to convictions for relevant sexual offences received in service courts as well as civilian courts.

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 has introduced a new civil preventative order; the sexual offences prevention order (SOPO). SOPOs can be made by service courts at the time of sentencing for a relevant sexual or violent offence where it is considered necessary to protect the public from serious sexual harm. SOPOs impose prohibitions on the offender and make him subject to the notification requirements for the duration of the order. Essentially this means that violent offenders who pose a risk of serious sexual harm can be made to sign on the sex offenders register.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many sex offenders are held in prisons within 50 miles of their home. [209529]

Paul Goggins: As at 31 October 2004 (the latest date for which these figures are available), 2,375 of the prisoners convicted of sex offences were held within 50 miles of their home address[1].

[1] A prisoner's home area is defined as their home address on reception into prison. For prisoners with no address, the address of the relevant committal court is used as the home address.

In measuring the number of prisoners held under 50 miles from their home area, around 5 per cent. of the sex offenders are not included as they have no home or court addresses.

Southend Basic Command Unit

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* trained police officers and *(b)* special constables there are in the Southend Basic Command Unit. [207629]

Ms Blears: Information on the number of officers in each Basic Command Unit (BCU) is provided annually (31 March) by each police force. As at 31 March 2004 there were 278 regular officers and 52 Special Constables in Southend BCU.

All officers receive full training for the duties they undertake.

Special Constables

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what form of body protection is provided for special constables. [207291]

Ms Blears: The decision whether to issue protective vests or other types of body armour to special constables is a matter for the chief constable. These decisions are informed by risk assessments of the operational deployment of special constables. While some police forces still issue from a central pool, others provide personal issue.

Aside from any generic risk assessments undertaken, forces need to make specific local risk assessments whenever appropriate, particularly if they do not have a policy stating that protective vests or other types of body armour must be worn.

Mr. Bailey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables have been injured in the line of duty since 1 January 2001. [207292]

Ms Blears: Information on the outcome of assaults on special constables has been collected centrally since 1 April 2002. For the period 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2004, there were 318 assaults on special constables which resulted in seven of them being seriously injured. The remaining 311 special constables suffered minor or no injury.

Serious injuries are defined as those resulting from assaults for which the charge would be under Sections 18 and 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

Stephen Lawrence Inquiry

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the transcript of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry. [201962]

Ms Blears: The department will not be publishing the papers from the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry. The papers received by the inquiry and their own records amount to more than 80,000 pages. The department is currently in the midst of reviewing and appraising the inquiry records prior to their transfer to The National Archives (TNA) where they can be made available for public inspection. This is a huge task and one that needs to be carried out with due sensitivity for the people involved. The current review schedule anticipates the inquiry transcripts being transferred to TNA in March 2005.

Video Evidence

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances a prisoner who is scheduled to make a court appearance by video link from prison can refuse to appear *(a)* generally, *(b)* on the grounds the individual cannot walk to the video conference facilities and *(c)* on the grounds that the individual has refused or failed to cut his toenails, preventing him from walking; and if he will make a statement. [207938]

Paul Goggins: There is no provision for an accused to attend his or her trial by live link from prison. Section 57 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 makes provision for pre-trial hearings to be conducted by live link. By virtue of this section, where a particular pre-trial hearing takes place by live link, the accused is to be treated as being present in court for it. A particular pre-trial hearing may only be conducted by live link where the court, after hearing representations from the parties, directs it. A party is accordingly free to object to the hearing taking place. The decision as to whether to proceed, or not to proceed with a pre-trial hearing by live link in the case of an accused who objects to it, for whatever reason, is a matter for the discretion of the court.

Youth Custody

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what fees are paid by the Youth Justice Board for a bed in a *(a)* local authority secure unit, *(b)* youth treatment centre and *(c)* young offenders institution. [209276]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2005]*: The juvenile secure estate comprises: young offender institutions run by the Prison Service; privately-operated secure training centres; and places purchased in local authority secure children's homes. The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales commission and purchase the places. They estimate the average annual costs per place to be:

	£000
Young offender institution:	50,800
Secure training centre:	[1]164,750
Local authority secure children's home:	185,780

[1] Includes Value Added Tax

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the standard staff to child ratio is in *(a)* local authority secure units, *(b)* secure treatment centres and *(c)* young offenders institutions. [209278]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 19 January 2005]*: It is not possible to specify standard ratios because of the many variables involved. Examples of the variation in ranges are given as follows:

> In local authority secure children's homes, between one member of staff to two children and six staff to eight children.
>
> In secure training centres (STCs), between two staff to five to seven children and three staff to eight children. There are also custody officers on site to cover admissions, movements and supervision of visits.
>
> In juvenile young offender institutions (YOIs) three to six staff to between 40 and 60 children on the wings; plus establishment reception, healthcare, instructional and education staff and personal and resettlement officers .

WORK AND PENSIONS

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205621]

Maria Eagle: The information is not collected separately from other expenditure figures.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208039]

Maria Eagle: Information on regional distribution of staff is available in the Library and also at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/
management_information/
statistical_information/statistics/
contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2003_report/
index.asp

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution.

Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2005.

Disability Benefit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 370–2W, on disability benefits, how many appellants who were originally in receipt of the lower rate have been awarded the higher rate mobility component of the disability living allowance after appealing against decisions made regarding the award of this benefit; and if he will make a statement. [208105]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Paul Holmes dated 25 January 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to respond to your question pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2004 *Official Report* columns 370–2W on disability benefits regarding how many appellants who were originally in receipt of the lower rate have been awarded the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance after appealing against decisions made regarding the award of this benefit; and if he will make a statement.

The information you require is not available in the format requested as information on Disability Living Allowance appeals is only recorded by the number of appeals and the actual success rate of those appeals.

Table 1, however, gives details of the number of Disability Living Allowance claimants whilst table 2 shows the total number of appeals received and their overall outcome.

Table 1: All disability living allowance claimants as at 31 August 2004

	Number
DLA caseload for all components	2,634.3
Higher rate mobility only	460.6
Lower rate mobility only	99.9

Notes:

1. Figures are in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures taken from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August 2004.
3. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Table 2: Disability living allowance mobility appeals received, cleared at hearing and outcome at Tribunal for the period September 2003 to August 2004

	Number
Received	4,395
Cleared at hearing	3,550
Cleared in favour of appellant	1,705
Cleared in favour of appellant (percentage)	48.03
Cleared against appellant	15
Cleared against appellant (percentage)	0.37
Original decision upheld	1,775
Original decision upheld (percentage)	49.97
Cleared others	60

Notes:

1. All figures are subject to change as more up to date data becomes available.
2. Figures for the latest months may rise significantly as information feeds through to the Appeals Service.
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest five and percentages to one decimal place.
4. Cleared against appellant are appeals where the resulting outcome has made the appellant worse off than before the appeal.
5. Original decision upheld—the original decision with regard to the benefit application has been upheld, therefore the appeal has been unsuccessful.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

E-mails

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's policy regarding the retention of e-mails in electronic form *(a)* after and *(b)* up to 1 January 2005; and what instructions have been given regarding the deletion of e-mails prior to 1 January 2005. [206949]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the written answers I gave the hon. Member for Guildford, (Sue Doughty) on 21 December 2004 *Official Report* colums 1727–1728W and 10 January 2005, *Official Report* column 111W.

Glasgow Pension Centre

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with representatives from the Public and Commercial Services union on the future of the Glasgow pension centre. [209658]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State has regular meetings with PCS officials to discuss and listen to their views and concerns about a wide range of issues facing the Department, including the efficiency challenge. These are generally national issues and therefore, do not focus on individual centres.

However, since January 2004, The Pension Service has held regular meetings with their Pensions Trade Union Representatives to consult and share information on The Pension Service transformation programme. The criteria for selecting sites that would form the future pension service organisation, and the outcome for London Pension Centre (Glasgow), has been included as part of this dialogue.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207641]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service. Information for the periods prior to June 2001 is not available.

Information on the amount spent in each financial year from 2001 onwards is in the following table.

£

Financial year	*Newspaper spend*	*Periodical spend*
2001–2002	24,757.96	228,207.11
2002–2003	[1]—	314,328.85
2003–2004	[1]—	266,764.89

[1] Included in periodical spend

A list of newspapers and periodicals purchased in financial year 2003–04 has been placed in the Library. Information on titles purchased prior to 2003–04 is not available.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many car parking spaces are provided for those working in and visiting his Department. [208938]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions occupies approximately 1,800 properties. Latest figures show that the total number of parking spaces available at buildings occupied by DWP staff is 35,428.

Where there is joint occupancy of properties, spaces are generally available to other occupants. Information on spaces designated specifically for DWP staff or visitors is not collected centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Pension Credit

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in *(a)* London and *(b)* Tower Hamlets are in receipt of the savings element of pension credit; what the average award is for each; and what proportion those figures represent of (i) the total number of pensioners and (ii) his estimate of the total number of eligible pensioners in each area. [209643]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of recipients of the savings element of pension credit in the London Government Office Region (GOR) and in Tower Hamlets at 31 October 2004 is given in the following table. The average award of the savings element in the London GOR at the end of August 2004, the latest date for which this figure is available, was £8.01. The average award in Tower Hamlets at the same date was £8.26. Eligibility estimates for the individual elements of pension credit are not available for either GORs or local authority areas.

Recipients of savings element of pension credit, London GOR and Tower Hamlets, 31 October 2004

	Households	*Individual recipients*	*Individual recipients as a percentage of total population aged 60 or over*
London GOR	137,230	159,885	13.7
Tower Hamlets	4,135	4,865	20.1

Notes:

1. Numbers of recipients are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
3. The numbers of households and individuals in receipt of the savings element include those who were receiving the savings element only and those who were receiving both the savings and guarantee elements.
4. Pension credit figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice.
5. Numbers of people aged 60 or over are based on the mid-2003 population estimates for England and Wales.
6. Average awards are based on a 5 per cent. sample as at August 2004. These figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to increase the take-up of pension credit. [209933]

Malcolm Wicks: The Pension Service continues to devote considerable effort and resources to increasing levels of Pension Credit take-up. We have already written at least once to every pensioner household in the country to tell them about Pension Credit and encourage them to apply. We are re-contacting directly, by mail, telephone or personal visit, those people whom we believe particularly likely to be eligible. New, targeted marketing campaigns have been developed which seek to overcome the barriers which might prevent take-up of Pension Credit and the reasons which people give for not applying, and further national television advertising began on 17 January. The Pension Service Local Service continues to work in partnership with local authorities and the voluntary sector, particularly in identifying and contacting older people who are vulnerable or who have yet to take up their entitlement

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of pensioners in Stoke-on-Trent are in receipt of pension credit; [210866]

(2) how many pensioners in Stoke-on-Trent are in receipt of pension credit. [210867]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 October 2004, 13,880 pensioner households in Stoke-on-Trent, comprising 16,970 individuals, were in receipt of pension credit. The number of individual recipients represented approximately 34 per cent. of the total population aged 60 or over in Stoke-on-Trent.

Notes

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Individual recipients include a small number of partners under age 60.
3. Pension credit figures are available for 31 October 2004 as the final output of processes that were put in place to deliver special monthly reporting during the first year of the roll-out of pension credit. As Parliament was told in the statement accompanying the last such report, data will in future be available on a quarterly basis, in line with standard departmental practice.
4. Numbers of people aged 60 or over are based on the mid-2003 population estimates for England and Wales.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 777W, on pensions, what the percentage rates of contracted-out rebates for appropriate personal pensions are for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2004–05 for a person aged (i) 40 and (ii) 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [211069]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table:

Percentage rates of contracted-out rebates for appropriate personal pensions

Percentage

Annual Earnings Bands	*Age 40*	*Age 50*
2002–2003		
3,900 to 10,800	10.80	19.80
10,801 to 24,600	2.70	4.95
24,601 to 29,900	5.40	9.90
2003–2004		
4,004 to 11,200	10.60	17.80
11,201 to 25,600	2.65	4.45
25,601 to 30,940	5.30	8.9

Note:

Contracted-out rebates for appropriate personal pensions are set at a level intended to reflect the value of the SERPS/State Second Pension benefit given up. SERPS was introduced in 1978 and so affected employed earners born in 1962 or later(i.e. those aged 40 in 2002–03. So, for those born before 1962, successively younger people have a lower SERPS/state second pension accrual rate. As a result, although the rebate for any one individual increases year on year until the cap bites, someone aged 46 in 2003–04 would have received a lower rebate rate in that year than someone aged 46 received in the preceding tax year.

This information is set out in the Government Actuary's rebate consultation document for the last review of the rebates which set the rates for the period 2002- 03 to 2006–07. Also the report to Parliament when the rebate orders were laid, Cm 5076, particularly the table on page 12. These are available on the Government Actuary Department's (GAD) website.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203480]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W by the former Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly).

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203918]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203958]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258–59W by Minister of State for Cabinet Office, Mr. David Miliband.

Winter Fuel Payments

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1746W, on winter fuel payments, how many married *(a)* women and *(b)* men in Scotland he estimates will reach the age of 60 years after the qualifying week for winter fuel payments eligibility but before 25 December. [209660]

Malcolm Wicks: It is estimated that around 6,000 married women and 6,000 married men in Scotland will reach the age of 60 after the qualifying week but before 25 December.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Appleby Health Review

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the remit is of the Appleby Health Review. [210025]

Angela Smith: Professor Appleby has agreed to conduct a review of health and social care provision in Northern Ireland, to consider and make recommendations in the following areas:

The current position in levels of demand in relation to levels of funding available;

The demands of the population for heath and social services in NI, taking account of its distinctive characteristics, in terms of long term and sustainable resourcing;

Technological, demographic, medical and other trends over the next two decades that may have implications for the future resource needs of the public sector in NI, consistent, where possible, with the approach adopted in the Wanless Review;

The extent to which resources are being used effectively and efficiently and, if there is evidence of sub-optimal resource utilisation, the issues which are impairing the most efficient and effective use of resources;

The scope for a more effective use of resources (human, revenue and capital) to bring about a significant improvement in access to, and quality of, services in the HPSS and specifically the optimum balance between prevention, community- based care and acute hospital care;

Ways in which the interaction between the health and social care systems can be improved to maximise performance and the use of resources;

The effectiveness of the organisational and incentive structures, decision-making and accountability processes in health and social care in NI;

Further measures to improve health and wellbeing, which can reduce the demand for health and social services.

Child Psychiatry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: : To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultants in child and adolescent psychiatry in each of the health board areas in the Province are providing a full-time out-of-hours service. [210024]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of consultants in child and adolescent psychiatry providing a full-time out-of-hours commitment by health and social services board

Area	*Headcount*
NHSSB	2
SHSSB	0
EHSSB	5
WHSSB	0
Total	7

Source:
NI Health and Social Services Trusts

Chlamydia Screening Programme

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the progress of the working group to consider the introduction of a chlamydia screening programme. [210065]

Angela Smith: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Chlamydia Testing Group had its first meeting on 6 December 2004. The group's remit is to develop policy and an approach to introducing an opportunistic testing programme for Chlamydia in Northern Ireland. The group is assessing potential settings for testing, the necessary laboratory arrangements to deal with increased numbers of samples, the impact on existing GUM services and a phased approach or roll out. A prevalence survey is also being considered.

Community Care Packages

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost of community care packages in the Province has been in each of the last 10 years. [210068]

Angela Smith: The combined gross Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) expenditure on domiciliary care, residential homes and nursing homes over the past four years, is as shown in the following table. Information on a comparable basis is not available for earlier years.

	£
2000–01	289,700,654
2001–02	314,212,537
2002–03	389,059,551
2003–04	417,428,318

This does not represent the cost to the HPSS of providing such services, because client contributions have not been netted off. For example, client contributions defrayed £80 million of the above 2002–03 costs. Client contributions for other years are not available.

Craigavon Maternity Unit

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the operation of the midwife-led maternity unit at Craigavon. [210039]

Angela Smith: Due to high levels of sick absence among midwifery staff, Craigavon Area Hospital Group Trust has recently had to temporarily redeploy some of the midwife-led Unit's staff to cover shifts in the ante-natal/post natal wards, delivery suite and admissions and assessment unit within the Maternity Unit.

While this temporary arrangement and its short-term effect on the Midwife-led Unit are regrettable, it has been necessary in order to ensure that a safe service is provided across all the Trust's maternity services.

Dementia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the costs that would be incurred by providing free nursing and personal care to those in the Province with dementia. [210067]

Angela Smith: Nursing care is already provided free of charge to patients in hospital and people in their own homes. In addition, in October 2002 the Northern Ireland Executive introduced a £100 per week contribution towards the cost of nursing care in nursing homes. The cost of nursing care for people with dementia has not been calculated.

No estimate is available of the costs that would be incurred by providing free personal care to people with dementia.

Digital Hearing Aids

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new patients received digital hearing aids in the Province in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; and how many new patients he expects to receive such aids in 2005. [210064]

Angela Smith: *(a)* Information on the numbers of persons provided with digital hearing aids is not available for the 2003 calendar year. However, during the period from October 2003 to the end of January 2004, a pilot monitoring programme was put in place, it recorded that approximately 2,000 persons were provided with digital hearing aids during this period.

(b) With regard to 2004, the Department's target for 2004–05 states that "Boards and Trusts should provide the necessary additional staff and digital hearing aids to provide for an efficient and modern audiology service, supplying 5,000 digital hearing aids per annum by 31 March 2005." Boards and Trusts have indicated that this will be achieved. A similar level of service can be expected in 2005–06.

Domiciliary Care

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost is of a *(a)* residential, *(b)* nursing home and *(c)* domiciliary community care package in the Province. [210046]

Angela Smith: An average residential home package costs £25,500 per year and a nursing home package costs £22,600 per year, based on the annualised weekly cost. domiciliary care costs £10 per hour delivered. These are average costs based on packages provided to a wide range of clients with differing care needs.

Drugs Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department regarding the extension of the Drugs Bill to Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [210430]

Mr. Spellar: I have sought and obtained approval for the extension to Northern Ireland of the following provisions in the Drugs Bill:

> The ability for a court to draw adverse inferences from a refusal to consent to an intimate drugs search;
>
> The extension of the power to detain persons suspected of swallowing drugs;
>
> Amendment to the offence of possession with intent to supply controlled drugs so that intent is presumed if the amount of drugs held by the person exceeds a certain threshold;
>
> Creation of aggravating circumstances in which a dealer will face an enhanced sentence—such as dealing near a school or using young persons as couriers; and
>
> Clarifying the law about magic mushrooms by making it a specific offence to possess with intent to supply, to supply, produce or import hallucinogenic mushrooms.

The Bill was introduced in the House on 16 December 2004.

EU Environmental Directives

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 784W, on Article 226 Reasoned Opinion proceedings, what the cause of the infraction proceedings was in each case. [208664]

Angela Smith: The following list sets out the EU directives that are subject to Article 226 Reasoned Opinion proceedings or beyond and the cause of the infraction in each case.

Directive number	*Directive title*	*Cause of Infraction*
1975/439/EC	Waste Oils	Implementation issue
1975/442/EC	Waste Framework	Transposition issue
1976/160/EC	Bathing Water	Implementation issue
1978/659/EC	Quality of Fresh Water to Support Fish	Implementation issue
1979/923/EC[1]	Shellfish Waters	Implementation issue
1991/271/EC	Urban Waste Water Treatment (two cases) (As of 22 December 2004 a further case is now at Reasoned Opinion Stage)	Implementation issues
1991/276/EC	Nitrates from Agricultural Sources	Implementation issue
1991/689/EC	Hazardous Waste	Transposition issue
1997/11/EC	Environmental Impact Assessment	Late transposition
1998/83/EC	Drinking Water Quality	Late transposition
2000/53/EC	End of Life Vehicles	Transposition issue

[1] Shellfish Waters—this case is at Article 226 and not Article 226 Reasoned Opinion as previously notified. The case has been dormant for a considerable period of time.

Note:

Two of the above cases are now closed i.e. Nitrates from Agricultural Sources and Drinking Water Quality.

GCSE Qualifications

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, what the GCSE point scores for all school types in Northern Ireland excluding GNVQ Part 1 qualifications and GCSE short courses have been in each year since 2000. [210769]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Lady to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Donaldson) on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 973W.

Genito-urinary Medicine Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the number of individuals in Northern Ireland awaiting assessment by genito-urinary medicine services. [210040]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 245W, question reference 205992.

Grammar Schools

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many pupils are enrolled in grammar schools in Northern Ireland; and how many were so enrolled in 2002–03. [210773]

Mr. Gardiner: The number of pupils enrolled at grammar schools in Northern Ireland in 2002–03 was 63,102; in 2004–05 it is 63,364. These figures exclude pupils in preparatory departments.

Hearing Impairment Services

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what monitoring controls are in place to assess quality of Government service delivery to deaf and hard of hearing people in Northern Ireland. [208321]

Mr. Spellar: All 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office have been issued with guidance on making information and events accessible, including to people who are deaf and hard of hearing. Some of these departments are working with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf to ensure that customer services are accessible.

In addition, the Department of Finance and Personnel is taking forward a work programme to ensure Government Buildings meet the needs of those with any form of disability, including those who are deaf or are hard of hearing. Departments in Northern Ireland, led by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, have been working in partnership with representatives of the deaf community to address important sign language issues, including best practice for the Northern Ireland civil service.

Further work will be taken forward by an inter departmental, inter sectoral group which has been established to address issues around barriers to participation experienced by people with disabilities, including access to services. Part of this work will involve a survey of people with disabilities in Northern Ireland.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what communication training other than deaf awareness training to communicate with those who are deaf or hard of hearing has been undertaken by each Northern Ireland Office department in the last 12 months. [208322]

Mr. Spellar: In the last 12 months Northern Ireland Departments have delivered the following communication training—'An Introduction to Sign Language' to 33 trainees, 'Sign Language Bridging Course' to one trainee, 'Sign Language Level 1' to four trainees and "Text Phone Training" to seven trainees.

Hip Replacements

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the latest estimate is of the cost of carrying out a hip replacement operation on the NHS in Northern Ireland; and how many people are waiting for a hip replacement operation in Northern Ireland. [211070]

Angela Smith: An average hip replacement operation cost £5,400 in 2003–04.

Waiting list information is not collected at procedure level, only at specialty level. At 30 September 2004, there were 5,668 patients awaiting admission to hospital in Northern Ireland in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty.

HIV Infection

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in Northern Ireland have been diagnosed with HIV in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* each of the 10 preceding years; and if he will make a statement on steps to limit the spread of HIV infection in the Province. [210037]

Angela Smith: The figures requested are as follows:

	Number diagnosed with HIV
1993	12
1994	14
1995	12
1996	16
1997	9
1998	9
1000	14
2000	19
2001	20
2002	26
2003	32
2004[1]	31

[1] Figure for this year represents the first three quarters of the year (until September 2004). This figure is provisional and is liable to change as further reports for this period are received.

Note:

Figures for new diagnoses of HIV infection relate to first UK diagnoses. Thus figures for Northern Ireland report cases whose first diagnosis of HIV in the UK was made in Northern Ireland

Source:

Health Protection Agency

All sexual health promotion work undertaken by Health and Social services Boards and Trusts and the Health Promotion Agency includes the prevention and spread of HIV infection. In October last year the Department hosted a major conference to increase awareness of sexually transmitted infections and is presently preparing a sexual health promotion strategy and action plan which includes HIV prevention and will be issued before the summer. In addition the Department funds a number of voluntary organisations working in the HIV prevention field.

Hospital Cleaners

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cleaners in hospitals in Northern Ireland are employed by *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* private contractors providing services to the NHS. [209165]

Angela Smith: Information requested is as follows.

Number of domestic cleaning staff in hospitals in Northern Ireland employed by the NHS

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole time equivalent*
Ards Hospital	27	11.96
Antrim Area Hospital	287	171.54
Bangor Hospital	8	4.78
Belfast City Hospital	204	40.41
Causeway Hospital	75	38.88
Daisy Hill Hospital	66	36.45
Dalriada Hospital	10	5.91
Downe Hospital	18	14.93
Downshire Hospital	38	25.48
Holywell Hospital	69	49.57
Lagan Valley Hospital	59	39.15
Longstone	46	21.19
Mater Hospital	100	71.00
Muckamore Hospital	80	56.00
Mullinure	13	9.89
Purdysburn Hospital	83	54.34
Robinson Hospital	5	3.10
Royal Hospital	511	323.73
South Tyrone	20	11.83
St. Lukes	48	27.22
Thompson House Hospital	7	3.39
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital	54	33.20
Ulster Hospital	300	97.34
Whiteabbey Hospital	3	2.07
Total	2,131	1,153.36

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Number of domestic cleaning staff in hospitals in Northern Ireland employed by private contractors providing services to the NHS

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Area Hospital	101	69.65
Banbridge Polyclinic	1	0.87
Craigavon Area Hospital	157	76.00
Erne Hospital	74	40.57
Forster Green Hospital	24	20.66
Gransha Hospital	39	25.50
Lurgan Hospital	18	8.17
Musgrave Park Hospital	124	81.15
Stradreagh Hospital	7	4.80
Tyrone County Hospital	48	26.50
Waterside Hospital	12	9.30
Total	605	363.17

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the take-up rate for influenza vaccination was in each area in the Province in each of the last five years. [210066]

Angela Smith: Information on the take-up rate for influenza vaccination in each Health and Social Service Board area in each of the last five years is detailed in the following table.

Percentage

Board area	*Uptake in over 65s*	*Uptake in under 65s 'at risk'*
2000–01		
EHSSB	67.1	No requirement to monitor uptake
NHSSB	70.5	No requirement to monitor uptake
SHSSB	66.6	No requirement to monitor uptake
WHSSB	70.6	No requirement to monitor uptake
2001–02		
EHSSB	70.3	No requirement to monitor uptake
NHSSB	73.2	No requirement to monitor uptake
SHSSB	72.4	No requirement to monitor uptake
WHSSB	71.9	No requirement to monitor uptake
2002–03		
EHSSB	71.5	53.8
NHSSB	73.6	58.1
SHSSB	71.8	51.6
WHSSB	72.1	61.6
2003–04		
EHSSB	73.0	62.6
NHSSB	73.8	65.1
SHSSB	72.8	61.2
WHSSB	74.7	67.4
2004–05[1]		
EHSSB	63.9	53.6
NHSSB	69.7	63.1
SHSSB	69.2	57.3
WHSSB	68.1	60.0

[1] The figures for 2004–05 only included those vaccinated up to the end of November 2004. The vaccination campaign does not end until 31 January 2005. Final 2004–05 influenza vaccination uptake figures will not be available before the beginning of April 2005.

Source:

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (NI)

Royal Mail

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the community balance of the workforce at the main postal sorting office at Mallusk, Co. Antrim was on the latest date for which figures are available; [209134]

(2) what the policy of Royal Mail is with regard to under-represented groups in its work force in Northern Ireland; [209135]

(3) whether Royal Mail *(a)* is taking and *(b)* has taken affirmative action to redress community imbalance in its work force in Northern Ireland; [209136]

(4) whether Royal Mail reports on the community balance in the travel-to-work area for each of its sites in Northern Ireland. [209137]

Mr. Spellar: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to write to the hon. Gentleman.

Neurosurgery

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province are awaiting *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* initial outpatient assessment in neurosurgery. [210038]

Angela Smith: The most recent waiting list data available shows the position at 30 September 2004.

In Northern Ireland, there were 483 patients awaiting admission to hospital in the neurosurgery specialty and 477 patients were awaiting a first outpatient appointment in the neurosurgery specialty.

New Deal

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of people in Northern Ireland leaving *(a)* the New Deal for Young People and *(b)* the New Deal for over-25s in each year since its inception have entered unsubsidised, sustained jobs. [210605]

Mr. Gardiner: The percentage of people in Northern Ireland leaving *(a)* the New Deal for 18 to 24-year-olds and *(b)* New Deal 25 + in each year since their inception and entering unsubsidised, sustained jobs is as follows:

Percentage

	New Deal for 18 to 24-year-olds	*New Deal 25 +*
1998–99	37	23
1999–2000	36	23
2000–01	30	18
2001–02	28	17
2002–03	24	14
2003–04	22	16

Obesity

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the level of obesity-related illness in the Province; and what the level was *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 20 years ago. [210030]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Orthopaedic Surgery

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the longest period is that individuals from each of the Province's health boards have been waiting for *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* initial outpatient assessment in orthopaedic surgery. [210031]

Angela Smith: Information obtained from the Health and Social Services Trusts in Northern Ireland regarding the longest period a patient is waiting for inpatient admission and initial outpatient assessment in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty, at 31 December 2004, is shown in the tables.

Longest period (in days) an individual was waiting for inpatient admission by board of residence at 31 December 2004

Board of residence	Longest wait in days
Eastern	2,495
Northern	2,111
Souhern	2,209
Western	1,240

Longest period (in days) an individual was waiting for initial outpatient assessment by board of residence at 31 December 2004

Board of residence	Longest wait in days
Eastern	2,254
Northern	1,989
Souhern	1,888
Western	1,895

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province are awaiting *(a)* inpatient admission and *(b)* initial outpatient assessment in orthopaedic surgery. [210032]

Angela Smith: The most recent waiting list data available shows the position at 30 September 2004.

In Northern Ireland, there were 5,688 patients awaiting admission to hospital in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty and 22,747 patients were awaiting a first outpatient appointment in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty

Police Reserve

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many full-time reserve constables in the police service of Northern Ireland are on annual extension contracts; and what terms they will be offered under the downsizing arrangements for the full-time reserve. [210884]

Mr. Paul Murphy: At present, 100 full-time reserve constables in the police service of Northern Ireland are on annual extensions to their contracts.

All full-time reserve officers in service up to the point at which they leave under the downsizing arrangements will be eligible to avail of the terms of the FTR Severance Scheme, including the comprehensive re-training and support services on offer. The specific benefits available to all FTR officers, including those on annual extensions, are dependent on each officer's individual circumstances.

Road Signs (Fermanagh)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by the Department for Regional Development in County Fermanagh on replacing road signs that have been destroyed by graffiti or other defacing between September and December in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [210881]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Member in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Donaldson, dated 25 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding how much was spent by the Department for Regional Development in County Fermanagh on replacing road signs that have been destroyed by graffiti or other defacing between September and December in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004 (210881) I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

While we do keep records of the costs of replacing roads signs in County Fermanagh, our records do not differentiate between signs that were replaced as a result of normal wear and tear, traffic accidents or graffiti. In addition, we record the costs of the removal of graffiti from road signs. The costs recorded for the periods you asked about, are detailed as follows.

£

Period	Graffiti removal	Replacement
September to December 2003	1,150	720
September to December 2004	1,850	550

I hope this information is helpful.

Saville Inquiry

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the total cost to the public purse of the Saville Inquiry into events in Londonderry in January 1972 has been, broken down by *(a)* legal fees, *(b)* accommodation, *(c)* transportation, *(d)* provision of IT equipment and *(e)* hiring of venues; [206059]

(2) when he will answer questions with reference numbers 206059 and 206060, on the Saville Inquiry, tabled on 15 December 2004. [210848]

Mr. Spellar: On the figures available at the end of December 2004 the total cost of the Bloody Sunday Inquiry was £154 million. Breaking this down into the categories requested gives the following figures:

£ million

	NIO	MOD
(a) legal fees	51.430	29.381
(b) accommodation	11.037	0.488
(c) transportation	3.091	—
(d) provision of IT equipment	12.769	—
(e) hiring of halls	8.02	—
(f) other	[1]34.99	[2]2.351

[1] For the NIO this figure includes salary costs of tribunal members (except Lord Saville) and inquiry staff, witness expenses, expert witnesses, office services and security, telecommunications and other miscellaneous office expenditure.

[2] For the MOD this figure includes inquiry related staff and support costs, a police investigation and other miscellaneous fees and expenses.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total legal costs have been of each participating legal team and person involved in the Saville Inquiry. [206060]

Mr. Spellar: The following table provides details of the payments made by the Northern Ireland Office to each of the legal firms involved in the Bloody Sunday Inquiry. These payments include VAT and other disbursements where appropriate and so do not necessarily represent the amounts received by individuals.

	Payments made (£)	Period covered From:	To:
Counsel for the inquiry			
Christopher Clarke	4,418,713	February 1998	January 2005
Jacob Grierson	394,879	July 1998	December 2000[1]
Alan Roxburgh	1,803,368	May 1998	October 2004
Cathryn McGahey	1,360,555	June 2000	October 2004
Bilal Rawat	1,251,947	June 2000	February 2004
Solicitors employed for the taking of witness statements			
Eversheds	12,609,388	June 1998	August 2003
Senior counsel representing the families			
Lord Gifford	718,830	October 1998	May 2004
Arthur Harvey	1,226,257	July 1998	March 2004
Michael Lavery	549,879	November 2000	May 2004
Barry J. McDonald	735,440	September 1998	July 2002[2]
P. T. MacDonald	65,800	April 1998	June 1999[3]
Michael Mansfield	682,378	March 1999	February 2004
Eilish McDermott	105,309	March 2000	June 2001
Seamus Treacy	951,140	March 1998	March 2004[4]
Eoin McGonigal	82,446	October 2000	June 2002
Kevin Finegan	235,000	July 1998	May 2001
Senior counsel representing NICRA			
Sir Louis Blom Cooper	507,359	December 2000	March 2004
Junior counsel representing the families			
John Coyle	429,021	September 1999	February 2003
Fiona Doherty	164,272	October 2000	October 2002
Ciaran Harvey	597,580	December 2000	March 2004
Richard Harvey	611,292	October 2000	June 2004
Brian Kennedy	594,716	July 1999	June 2003
Philip Magee	83,175	June 1998	October 2000[5]
Kieran Mallon	801,759,	March 1999	June 2004
Brian McCartney	832,707	October 1998	May 2004
Karen Quinlivan	290,193	March 1999	May 2002
Patricia Smyth	328,718	October 1998	June 2002
Michael Topolski	139,940	November 2000	March 2004[6]
Mary McHugh	384,111	February 2002	March 2004
Junior counsel representing NICRA			
Paddy O'Hanlon	230,151	November 2000	October 2002
Solicitors representing the families			
Barr and Co.	631,736	February 1999	June 2004
Brendan Kearney and Co.	792,901	July 1999	September 2003
Desmond Doherty and Co.	1,157,583	November 1998	May 2004
MacDermott and McGurk	1,122,144	November 1998	May 2004
Madden and Finucane	8,100,577	January 1998	May 2004
McCann and McCann	630,018	October 1998	May 2004
McCartney and Casey	1,145,883	November 1998	May 2004
Solicitor representing NICRA			
Francis Kennan	436,125	May 2000	June 2003
Legal representatives for other witnesses			
Various solicitors and counsel	12,539,645	April 1998	April 2003

[1] Left the case in December 2000.

[2] Left the case (as a junior) in September 2000 and rejoined the case (as a senior) in July 2001.

[3] Left the case in June 1999.

[4] Having started as a junior in March 1998, became a senior counsel in September 2000.

[5] Left the case in September 2000.

[6] Left the case in June 2001.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has advised me that the following payments have been made to counsel and solicitors in respect of work for the Bloody Sunday Inquiry by his Department.

Senior counsel representing HM armed forces	Payments made (£)
Edwin Glasgow QC	3,947,632
Edmund Lawson QC	938,748
David Lloyd Jones QC	1,070,465
Gerard Elias QC	1,776,319
Peter Clarke QC	958,852
Sir Allan Green QC	1,517,201
Rosamund Horwood-Smart QC	660,445
Sir Sydney Kentridge QC	52,875
Anna Worrall QC	100,456
Senior counsel representing MOD	
Ian Burnett QC	228,007
Philip Havers QC	7,138
Junior counsel representing HM armed forces	
Alexander Milne	408,662
Bridget Petherbridge	136,798
Huw Davies	369,374
Ian Leist	965,146
Michael Hick	253,895
Gaby Bonham-Carter	277,392
Pamela Morrison	131,378
Kristian Mills	56,928
Nicholas Moss	974,636
Sam Grodzinski	1,877
Stephen Requena	88,160
Alan May	299,009
Andrew Hurst	585,905
David Bradly	1,269,715
Michael Bools	925,446
Nicholas Griffin	1,190,074
Thomas Quinton	409,945
Junior counsel representing the MOD	
William Hoskins	8,620
Sacha Ackland	2,775
Jonathan Hough	4,488
Solicitors representing HM armed forces	
Devonshires	1,931,140
Kingsley Napley	1,930,774
Payne Hicks Beach	3,016,781
Jacqueline Duff	172,333
Treasury Solicitor	2,711,326

Speech and Language Therapists

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speech and language therapists are employed in each of the Health and Social Services Board areas in Northern Ireland. [210882]

Angela Smith: The information requested is provided in the table.

Area	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
NHSSB	82	71.82
SHSSB	57	50.41
EHSSB	156	130.98
WHSSB	50	48.13
Total	345	301.34

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speech and language therapists are employed by the Western Health and Social Services Board in County Fermanagh. [210883]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of speech and language therapists employed by the Western Health and Social Services Board in County Fermanagh is not held centrally. Speech and language therapists are employed by trusts within each board area and will cover the entire trust area. The table shows the number of speech and language therapists employed by the Western Health and Social Services Board by trust.

Trust	*Headcount*	*Whole- time equivalent*
Foyle Community HSS Trust	30	28.13
Sperrin/Lakeland HSS Trust	20	20.00
Total	50	48.13

Prisons

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides there have been at prisons in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [210029]

Mr. Pearson: There have been 37 recorded deaths in custody over the last 10 years. Where the cause of death has been determined by a Coroner's inquest, 18 of the deaths were found to be suicide. An inquest is awaited on four deaths.

	Total deaths (including suicides)	*Deaths recorded as suicides*
1995	3	2
1996	5	4
1997	8	1
1998	2	1
1999	4	3
2000	6	4
2001	0	0
2002	2	[1]2
2003	3	[2]1
2004	4	[2]0
Total	37	18

[1] In one case, the Coroner recorded a verdict of "did not die by own act".

[2] Two further cases, in both 2003 and 2004, await the verdict of an inquest.

Tourist Board

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what grants have been made by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to the owners of boats on inland waterways in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [210880]

Mr. Gardiner: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has offered no grants to the owners of boats on inland waterways in Northern Ireland since 2000.

Theft and Fraud

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost to the Province's health service of *(a)* theft and *(b)* fraud in each of the last six years. [210069]

Angela Smith: Information on the estimate of the cost to the Province's health service of *(a)* theft and *(b)* fraud, in each of the last six years is provided in the following table:

Year ending 31 March	*Reported losses due to theft and fraud*[1] *(£)*	*Estimate of loss due to incorrect claiming of prescription exemption*[2] *(£ million)*
2004	61,721	8.0
2003	121,204	10.0
2002	118,148	10.0
2001	238,972	11.3
2000	71,557	13.8
1999	24,956	12.1

[1] This represents the amounts reported in the annual accounts of the Department, Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts. It should be noted that the figures for years ending 31 March 1999, 2000 and 2001 relate to Health and Social Services Boards and Trusts only as figures for the Department were not collected until year ended 31 March 2002. The information is not separately available on losses due to theft and fraud.

[2] It should be noted that the estimate of loss due to incorrect claiming of exemptions from prescription charges, will include those losses due to error as well as fraud.

The Department remains committed to the continuing reduction of loss of funds due to fraud and theft.

Town Centre Retailing

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his policy is on the use of planning guidance and planning powers to protect the economic viability of town centre retailing in Northern Ireland. [210611]

Mr. Spellar: The current policy is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5—Retailing and Town Centres. It sets out policies on major retail development to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres. This policy is currently being updated and it is proposed to introduce sequential and needs tests that will further protect and enhance the economic viability of town centre retailing in Northern Ireland.

Trolley Waits

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many trolley waits *(a)* in total and *(b)* lasting more than two hours there were in the Province during each quarter over the last five years; and how many trolley waits there were on each day since 1 December 2004. [210044]

Angela Smith: The total number of hospital trolley waits is reported to the Department by trusts on a quarterly basis.

Number of hospital trolley waits recorded in Northern Ireland by quarter1999–2000 to 2003–2004

Quarter	Number patients waiting on a trolley Over 2 hours	Total
30 June 1999	1,018	13,994
30 September 1999	1,265	15,172
31 December 1999	1,686	16,416
31 March 2000	2,071	17,743
1999–2000	6,040	63,325
30 June 2000	1,701	17,296
30 September 2000	1,960	17,483
31 December 2000	2,851	21,735
31 March 2001	3,834	19,365
2000–01	10,346	75,879
30 June 2001	2,943	18,491
30 September 2001	3,421	18,976
31 December 2001	4,054	19,544
31 March 2002	4,623	20,407
2001–02	15,041	77,418
30-June 2002	5,207	21,247
30 September 2002	5,180	24,320
31 December 2002	7,046	25,135
31 March 2003	7,698	25,680
2002–03	25,131	96,382
30 June 2003	6,896	25,620
30 September 2003	6,468	26,080
31 December 2003	7,750	26,424
31 March 2004	8,864	25,969
2003–04	29,978	104,093

Note:

In a small number of cases trusts have returned data for a representative sample of trolley waits.

The Department also receives daily returns (Monday to Friday) on the number of trolley waits based on a snapshot taken at 9.00am in each accident and emergency department across Northern Ireland.

Number of hospital trolley waits recorded at 9.00am in Northern Ireland each week day from 1 December 2004.19 January 2005

Date	Trolley waits
1 December 2004	51
2 December 2004	62
3 December 2004	59
6 December 2004	54
7 December 2004	82
8 December 2004	67
9 December 2004	58
10 December 2004	69
13 December 2004	64
14 December 2004	69
15 December 2004	80
16 December 2004	59
17 December 2004	52
20 December 2004	66
21 December 2004	46
22 December 2004	42
23 December 2004	28
24 December 2004	4
27 December 2004	3
28 December 2004	11
29 December 2004	14
30 December 2004	56
31 December 2004	78
3 January 2005	66
4 January 2005	100
5 January 2005	128
6 January 2005	128
7 January 2005	96
10 January 2005	109
11 January 2005	166
12 January 2005	84
13 January 2005	93
14 January 2005	80
17 January 2005	81
18 January 2005	104
19 January 2005	89

Note:

This information shows a snapshot of the number of trolley waits at 9.00am each weekday.

The Department also receives daily returns (Monday to Friday) on the number of trolley waits based on a snapshot taken at 9.00am in each accident and emergency department across Northern Ireland.

Number of hospital trolley waits recorded at 9.00am in each acute hospital on 19 January 2005

Hospital	Number
Altnagelvin	0
Antrim	5
Belfast City	17
Causeway	0
Craigavon	13
Downe	0
Lagan Valley	6
Mater	16
Mid Ulster	3
Daisy Hill	0
Royal Victoria	18
Sperrin Lakeland[1]	0
Ulster	11
Whiteabbey	0
Total	89

[1] Data is not supplied separately for Tyrone county hospital and Erne hospital. This information shows a snapshot of the number of trolley waits at 9.00am each week day morning.

Tsunami (Fraud)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on fraudulent attempts in Northern Ireland by persons claiming to seek donations destined for victims of the recent tsunami; what his assessment is of *(a)* the nature of this fraud and *(b)* how widespread it is; and what advice his Department has given to members of the public about making secure donations. [209120]

Mr. Pearson: As of 17 January, the police service of Northern Ireland noted one minor incident of fraudulent charity collection in connection with the tsunami disaster in Asia. The amount of money involved amounted to no more than £5.

General advice about giving only to registered charities and persons who hold collection permits was circulated by the police last week, via the media. This represented sensible precautions to be taken when contributing to charity appeals, and was not released in connection with any specific incident of fraudulent fund raising.

Ulster Hospital

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for surgery at the Ulster hospital was in each of the last four years. [210431]

Angela Smith: The average length of wait (in days) for people who had surgery at the Ulster hospital in each of the last four years for which information is available is detailed in the following table.

	Average number of days waiting prior to admission
2000–01	63
2001–02	64
2002–03	76
2003–04	87

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System (DHSSPSNI)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for treatment in the accident and emergency department at the Ulster Hospital was in each of the last *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months and *(c)* 12 months for which statistics are available. [210432]

Angela Smith: The Ulster hospital is unable to calculate the average time waited by patients who received treatment in the Accident and Emergency department. However, the Trust has supplied the number of patients treated within the standard set for their priority categories (see the following).

There are five priority categories that patients who attend Accident and Emergency are assigned to:

Priority 1—to be seen by a doctor within five minutes

Priority 2—to be seen by a doctor within 10 minutes

Priority 3—to be seen by a doctor within 60 minutes

Priority 4—to be seen by a doctor within 120 minutes

Priority 5—to be seen by a doctor within 240 minutes

Number of patients treated in the Accident and Emergency Department at the Ulster hospital

			Priority		
	1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*
(a) October-December 2004					
Treated within standard	35	272	3,500	4,149	175
Not treated within standard	30	546	2,682	1,266	7
Total treated October-December 2004	65	818	6,182	5,415	182
(b) July-December 2004					
Treated within standard	66	550	7,036	9,638	386
Not treated within standard	46	1,059	5,305	2,849	12
Total treated July-December 2004	112	1,609	12,341	11,487	398
(c) January-December 2004					
Treated within standard	134	1,119	12,728	15,651	742
Not treated within standard	87	2,350	11,548	6,769	36
Total treated January-December 2004	221	3,469	24,276	22,420	778

Source:
Ulster Community and Hospitals HSS Trust

HEALTH

Allergies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on EU Directive 2000/13/EC in respect of ingredients listing and allergens. [209814]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A recent amendment of European Union Directive 2000/13/EC on ingredient listing will require the declaration of all ingredients including allergens on pre-packed food from November 2005. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) consulted on the new requirements and the representations received indicated wide support for the new rules from allergy support groups and food manufacturers. In addition, a number of respondents identified the need for better control of the use of "may contain" allergen labelling, and the need for the provision of more allergen information for foods sold loose and in catering establishments. The FSA is actively considering with key stakeholders how best to encourage the provision of clearer, more helpful allergen information in these cases.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Government's strategy is for allergy prevention. [209815]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department is committed to ensuring that the national health service develops an allergy service which offers high quality and personalised care to all its patients.

The Department will work with a wide range of key players to ensure future developments in allergy care are credible and command respect and ownership of those people they are designed to help and the practitioners who care for them. The first key stage of this work will be to carry out a review of the available data and research on the epidemiology of allergic conditions, the demand for and provision of treatment and the effectiveness of relevant interventions. Developing a sound evidence base will be essential to determining the correct future direction of allergy services.

Chinese People (Care Provision)

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms local authorities and other partners use to work together to provide accommodation with culturally appropriate services and extra care provision to Chinese older people under the National Service Framework. [207950]

Dr. Ladyman: It is the responsibility of local commissioners and providers to work together to ensure that the provision of all health and care services are receptive to the needs of people from different ethnic communities and respect cultural differences, as promoted in the national service framework for older people. The provision of "Extra Care" housing does not preclude any ethnic group.

Choosing Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will publish the Delivery Strategy for the public health White Paper, Choosing Health. [209722]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A commitment was given in the public health White Paper, "Choosing Health", to publish a delivery plan "early in 2005". The date of publication has not yet been finalised.

Cleanliness Scores

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the results of the 2004 Patient Environment Action Team cleanliness scores were passed to the Healthcare Commission. [209591]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In accordance with a methodology determined by the Healthcare Commission, they received information based on patient environment action team scores, aggregated to trust level, on 28 May 2004.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200776]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow) on 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 162W, in which I listed expenditure by the Department and the national health service on external consultancy services in each year from 1996–97 to 2003–04. It is not possible to identify separately the figures for consultancy spend on public private partnership consultants.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total external spend by his Department was on private finance initiative (PFI) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PFI consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200777]

Mr. Hutton: The external spend on private finance initiative consultancy work in each of the last two complete financial years was:

	Cost (£)	*Number of firms*
April 2002 to March 2003	207,171	6
April 2003 to March 2004	892,859	12

The fee charged in the majority of cases was for specific work at an agreed cost with the company. It is, therefore, not possible to calculate how many consultants were employed, nor how many consultancy days there were per year.

Dermatology

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the length of time that patients with severe skin diseases will wait to access new biological and immuno-suppressant therapies; and if he will make a statement; [209023]

(2) what impact he expects the cost of new biological and immuno-suppressant therapies to have on dermatology services and their resources; and if he will make a statement; [209024]

(3) if he will take steps to ensure that patients with chronic skin diseases have access to the widest possible range of treatments, including new biological and immuno-suppressant therapies. [209025]

Dr. Ladyman: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has been commissioned to assess the clinical and cost effectiveness of Efalizumab and Etanercept in the treatment of psoriasis and are expected to provide guidance to the national health service by October 2005.

Once advice from NICE is available, we expect the NHS to fund recommended drugs where these are clinically appropriate. The NHS has three months from the date of publication of each technology appraisal guidance to provide funding for treatments.

The delivery of health services, including the funding of treatments recommended by NICE, rests with primary care trusts (PCTs). It is for PCTs to decide what services to provide for their populations, including the treatment of chronic skin conditions, as they are best placed to understand local health needs and commission services to meet them accordingly.

DPT Vaccine

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when mercury was removed from the diptheria, polio and tetanus (DPT) vaccine used in the UK; [209390]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the effect of mercury in the diptheria, polio and tetanus (DPT) vaccine *(a)* on the immune system and *(b)* in reaction with the MMR vaccine. [209391]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Prior to 27 September 2004, ethylmercury was present in the combined diphtheria, tetanus and whole-cell pertussis vaccine (DTwP) in the form of the preservative thiomersal. With the introduction of a new combined diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis, inactivated polio and *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (DTaP/IPV/Hib) vaccine on this date, the routine childhood immunisation programme no longer includes a thiomersal-containing vaccine.

This change was made because the low risk of importation of polio in the United Kingdom provided the opportunity to move from the use of a live polio vaccine to an inactivated polio vaccine as well as the availability of an acellular pertussis vaccine which was as effective as the previous whole-cell pertussis. Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine does not contain (and never has contained) thiomersal.

There is no credible scientific evidence that demonstrates a mechanism through which thiomersal in DTP could interact with MMR. The issue of whether ethylmercury-containing vaccines could affect a constituent of another vaccine has been considered by the US Institute of Medicine (IOM) as part of their review of multiple immunizations and immune dysfunction (Immunization Safety Review: 'Multiple Immunizations and Immune Dysfunction', 2002). Several large studies have found no evidence of a link between either MMR vaccine or thiomersal-containing vaccines and neurodevelopmental disorders.

Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* drug and alcohol rehabilitation units and *(b)* drug rehabilitation beds there were in (i) England, (ii) North Somerset local authority and (iii) the constituency of Weston-super-Mare in each year since 1997. [210344]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* In England, there are currently 111 residential rehabilitation units and 2,414 drug rehabilitation beds.

In North Somerset, there are 12 rehabilitation units and 269 rehabilitation beds.

In Weston-super-Mare, there are 11 rehabilitation units and 213 rehabilitation beds.

Full details can be found on the National Treatment Agency's (NTA) residential services directory at www.nta.uk/residential/index. The NTA have published this information from summer 2003 and it is not available before this date.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many individuals received treatment at drug rehabilitation centres in *(a)* North Somerset and *(b)* the constituency of Weston-super-Mare in each year since 1997; and what proportion of those receiving treatment discharged themselves from treatment services after less than 12 weeks. [210346]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The National Drug Monitoring System (NDTMS) has data for 2003–04. NDTMS data is not available for earlier years or at constituency level.

In 2003–04, there were 304 people in treatment in the two rehabilitation units in North Somerset for which data are available.

Out of the 304 people in treatment in North Somerset in 2003–04, 36 (12 per cent.) left or dropped out of treatment before 12 weeks.

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government will take steps to require all drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres *(a)* to be registered with (i) local authorities and (ii) other bodies and *(b)* to be subject to an inspection regime. [210350]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* From the commencement of the Care Standards Act 2000 in April 2002, the registration and inspection of drug and alcohol rehabilitation units as care homes became the responsibility of the National Care Standards Commission (NCSC). In April 2003, the NCSC became part of the new Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), and NCSCs role of registration and inspection is now part of the work of CSCI.

The Fees and Frequency of Inspections Regulations 2004 require CSCI to inspect most establishments a minimum of once or twice a year.

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on waiting lists at Eastbourne District General Hospital. [208103]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Eastbourne District General Hospital is part of East Sussex Hospitals National Health Service Trust. The Trust is currently achieving both elective admission and first out-patient appointment waiting time targets.

In March 2003, there were 403 patients, waiting over nine months for in-patient treatment. According to latest available data (November 2004), there were no patients waiting over nine months.

In March 2003, there were 302 patients waiting over 17 weeks for out-patient treatment. According to latest available data (September 2004), there were no patients waiting over 17 weeks.

EU Constitution (Rights of the Child)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Healthwhether it is his Department's assessment that the requirement of article 1–3(3) of the proposed EU Constitution for the protection of the rights of the child applies to unborn children. [208083]

Mr. Hutton: The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union is a political declaration and currently not legally binding. It has been incorporated within the EU Constitution signed recently, and once that is ratified and in force, the Charter will be binding on the EU institutions, and on member states in so far as they are implementing EU law. However, the regulation of medical ethical issues, such as the rights of the unborn child, is not regulated under EU law, and as such, the Charter would not apply.

Food Supplements Directive

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of *(a)* the effect upon consumers and *(b)* the impact on his Department's work towards its policy objectives of the removal from the market after July of those food supplements which are regarded as safe by United Kingdom regulatory authorities but which do not meet the technical requirements of the Food Supplements Directive and the Food Supplements (England) Regulations 2003. [209798]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him on 6 December, 2004, *Official Report,* columns 351–52W.

Haringey Social Services

Kali Mountford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed in Haringey Social Services Department, broken down by grade; what the vacancy rate is; and how many care managers in specialist teams for mental health are employed. [210290]

Dr. Ladyman: At 30 September 2003 (the latest date for which data are available) the whole time equivalent number of staff directly employed by Haringey Social Services Department was 1,295. Data on the number of care managers in specialist teams solely for mental health are not available centrally, but as at 30 September 2003, the whole time equivalent number of care managers in specialist teams for mental health, people with learning disabilities and/or people with physical disabilities directly employed by Haringey was 10. Data on numbers of staff by grade and vacancy rates are not available centrally.

Hepatitis C

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was spent on hepatitis C treatment by Norfolk primary care trusts (PCTs) in each of the last five years; and what guidance he has issued to those PCTs on treatment for hepatitis C. [210247]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We do not hold the information requested about expenditure on hepatitis C treatment by Norfolk primary care trusts.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) published guidance on the use of interferon alfa (pegylated and non-pegylated) and ribavarin for the treatment of chronic hepatitis C in January 2004. The guidance is available on NICE'S website at http://www.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?o = 101627.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated in 2004–05 for hepatitis C awareness and prevention. [210249]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Estimated central expenditure on activities connected with hepatitis C awareness-raising and prevention in 2004–05 is £780,000.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice the Government have given to primary care trusts concerning the relationship between hepatitis C and chronic disease. [210250]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The national health service hepatitis C awareness website at www.hepc.nhs.uk and associated publication, "Hepatitis C: essential information for professionals and guidance on testing", both contain information on hepatitis C and liver disease. Guidance from the National Institute of Clinical Excellence on the treatment of chronic hepatitis C also contains similar advice.

Homelessness

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how his Department provides access to *(a)* detoxification services and *(b)* primary health care for homeless people. [206596]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department provides access to detoxification services for homeless people via funding through the pooled drug treatment budget, which is £253.4 million in 2004–05, in addition to primary care trust (PCT) mainstream expenditure.

The National Treatment Agency, which was set up by Government in 2001 to increase the effectiveness and availability of drug treatment is working closely with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This is to ensure that drug action teams, which have the responsibility for commissioning drug treatment services locally, including detoxification, include the needs of homeless drug users in their treatment plans.

Access is also provided by primary health care for homeless people through PCTs, which have a duty to secure the provision of primary medical services for their local populations, including any homeless people. The new contractual framework for primary medical services now offers PCTs a variety of contracting mechanisms, including provision of a service themselves, to help them to discharge this duty.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what circumstances a product or treatment may bypass the Rapid Review Panel assessment; and if he will list the products or treatments that have done so. [208998]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Consideration by the rapid review panel may not be appropriate for products where the results of manufacturers' own studies have shown that the product has potential value for hospitals and other healthcare premises. To date, only the JohnsonDiversey Jonmaster microfibre cleaning system has not been considered by the panel on these grounds.

Information on products used to prevent and control healthcare associated infections is not collected centrally and it is not compulsory for manufacturers to go through the Health Protection Agency rapid review panel in order to make their product available in the national health service.

Intermediate Care Accommodation

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Health under what provisions of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 the inspection of intermediate care accommodation is required. [204658]

Dr. Ladyman: Health care facilities providing intermediate care are inspected under the provisions of Part two of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Standards Act 2003. Social care facilities providing intermediate care may be inspected under the Care Standards Act 2000, if that care is provided by an establishment or agency as defined in sections four and five of that Act.

London Heart Hospital

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of purchasing the London Heart Hospital; whether the hospital is working at full capacity; and if he will make a statement. [210359]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* This is a matter for the Chair of the University College London Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to the Chairman, Peter Dixon, informing him of the hon. Member's inquiry.

Telecommunications Masts

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent international research he has assessed on the health risks of mobile phone masts. [209299]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The National Radiological Protection Board provides statutory advice on risks from exposure to radiation and electromagnetic fields. Their recent publication "Mobile Phones and Health 2004" (Documents of the NRPB, Vol. 15, No. 5, 2004) issued on 11 January has reviewed the possible health implications of mobile phones and base stations and made a number of recommendations. Appendix D of the report lists and summarises recent research reviews from a number of different countries. The report is available on the NRPB website www.nrpb.org and copies are available in the Library. The Government are currently considering the recommendations.

MRI Scans/Scanners

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting times for MRI scans were in *(a)* the South Staffordshire Hospital Trust and *(b)* each of the primary care trusts in Stoke-on-Trent in the last period for which figures are available. [209903]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of *(a)* a MRI scanner and *(b)* a CT scanner; and what resource funding is needed to run a scanner for a year. [210366]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The costs of both magnetic resonance image (MRI) scanners and computed tomography (CT) scanners are dependent on a number of factors, such as scanner specification, software and hardware options included and the price submitted by the supplier during the tender process.

The approximate capital purchase costs of an MRI scanner may range from £700,000 to £1,700,000, and £400,000 to £800,000 for a CT scanner.

Revenue funding for CT and MRI scanners will also vary according to staff numbers who operate these scanners directly or indirectly. These include radiologists, radiographers and administrative and clerical staff. There are also non-staff costs such as the maintenance contract, consumable use, and depreciation rate. The annual revenue costs for CT and MRI scanners may range from £250,000 to £400,000 per annum.

MRSA

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has evaluated on the proportion of people who carry MRSA in their nostrils with no adverse effect to themselves; and what precautions are taken to protect hospital patients from medical practitioners who may be carrying MRSA in this way. [208662]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Many people are known to carry methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) with no adverse consequences to themselves or others but precise numbers are not available. The prevalence of MRSA in hospital settings varies considerably and transmission is controlled by good infection control and cleaning practices. The Government have published guidance including "Winning Ways and Towards Cleaner Hospitals and Lower rates of Infection" to help the national health service locally control the spread of infection.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government will provide compensation to those contracting MRSA in national health service hospitals and clinics. [209420]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Currently, compensation can only be awarded if a claim for clinical negligence has been made and a breach of duty of care towards the patient is admitted or proven.

Pressure Sores

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of the incidence of pressure sores in hospitals in the last year for which figures are available; and how many patients were affected; [209890]

(2) what estimate he has made of the incidence of pressure sores in care homes in the last year for which figures are available; and for what proportion of patients this problem originated in the acute sector. [209891]

Dr. Ladyman: The data are not collected centrally. Pressure sores should be monitored as part of the clinical governance arrangements across the national health service and should also be included in Healthcare Commission inspections.

Public Bodies

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people are employed by the *(a)* Public Health Laboratory Service, *(b)* Family Health Services Special Health Authority and *(c)* NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body; [203743]

(2) how many people are employed by *(a)* NHS Estates, *(b)* NHS Professionals, *(c)* UK Transplant, *(d)* the Independent Regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts and *(e)* the NHS University; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body; [203750]

(3) how many people are employed by the *(a)* Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health, *(b)* Mental Health Act Commission, *(c)* National Care Standards Commission, *(d)* NHS Appointments Commission and *(e)* Retained Organs Commission; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body; [203751]

(4) how many people are employed by the *(a)* Dental Vocational Training Authority, *(b)* Human Fertility and Embryology Authority, *(c)* National Clinical Assessment Authority, *(d)* National Blood Authority, *(e)* NHS Logistics Authority and *(f)* Prescription Pricing Authority; what the running cost of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body; [203752]

(5) how many people are employed by the *(a)* Health Development Agency, *(b)* NHS Information Agency, *(c)* NHS Modernisation Agency and *(d)* NHS Pensions Agency; what the running costs of each body was in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of each body. [203824]

Mr. Hutton: Figures for gross operating costs and staff for these bodies were published in the 20 July report, "Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies". This report is available in the Library. Staffing levels and running costs will have changed since then and will be adjusted further in setting budgets for 2005–06.

The National Care Standards Commission and the Retained Organs Commission were dissolved on 1 April 2004.

A written ministerial statement about the future of these bodies was made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on Tuesday 30 November, *Official Report*, columns 24–27WS. An implementation framework, setting out the timetable and process for a number of changes, was published and copies are available in the Library.

Social Services (Older People)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action he is taking to improve the assessment of older social services clients; and when he expects that the Government target of 70 per cent. completion within two weeks will be reached. [209657]

Dr. Ladyman: In July 2002, the Government announced an additional £1 billion for social services over three years from 2003–04 to 2005–06. We are investing in a range of initiatives to improve care for all older people including grants of £684 million in 2005–06. Councils can use this funding to speed up assessments and the provision of care.

I now expect councils with social services responsibilities to be meeting the December 2004 targets on assessment.

Stewart Report

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which of the recommendations from the Mobile Phone and Health 2004 report by Sir William Stewart have been implemented; [210263]

(2) whether he has met Sir William Stewart to discuss his report Mobile Phones and Health 2004; and if he will make a statement. [210268]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Sir William Stewart, in his capacity as Chairman of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB), announced the new report, "Mobile Phones and Health 2004"—Documents of the NRPB, Vol. 15, No 5, 2004—on 11 January 2005. The report has provided a review of the progress made since the Stewart Report in May 2000 and made a number of observations and recommendations. The report is available on the NRPB website at www.nrpb.org and copies are available in the Library. Ministers have not met with Sir William to discuss the report and officials are currently considering the detailed recommendations.

Waiting Times

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting times for *(a)* inpatient and *(b)* outpatient appointments were in England in each of the last five years. [209916]

Mr. Hutton: Table 1 shows the median waiting time for an inpatient admission at end of month for patients still waiting from March 2000 to November 2004, England.

Table 1: Median waiting time for inpatient waiters

Month ended	*Weeks*
March 2000	12.9
March 2001	12.6
March 2002	12.7
March 2003	11.9
March 2004	10.2
November 2004	8.4

Source:

Department of Health, QF01 (commissioner based)

Table 2 shows outpatient waiting times, median waits for patients seen during the quarter, March 2000 to November 2004, England.

Table 2: Median outpatient waiting time

Quarter ending	*Weeks*
March 2000	7.73
March 2001	7.46
March 2002	7.63
March 2003	7.40
March 2004	7.08
Sept 2004	7.13

Source:

Department of Health, QM08R (commissioner based)

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207241]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 17 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Substance Misuse

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which countries were visited by his Department's officials and Ministers in relation to substance misuse in 2004. [208935]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In 2004, officials visited Portugal, Poland and Belgium in relation to substance misuse.

No countries were visited by Departmental Ministers in 2004 in relation to substance misuse.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 26 January 2005

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carrier Project

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce the Government's choice of programme integrator for the aircraft carrier project. [210690]

Mr. Ingram: The process to select the physical integrator for the future aircraft carrier project is ongoing, and we anticipate announcing the outcome shortly.

Cash Machines

Mr. McFall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many cash machines are currently provided on *(a)* bases and *(b)* other property owned, rented or otherwise used by his Department; how many of these cash machines (i) levy a surcharge for withdrawing cash and (ii) are free to use; whether any of the machines which are free to use are in areas that are only accessible by officers; and if he will make a statement. [204981]

Mr. Ingram: There are 268 machines on military bases in Great Britain, Northern Ireland and Germany. Of these, 257 levy a surcharge, leaving 11 machines that are free to use. The free machines are mainly located where troops are confined to base in some way, either for training or security reasons. At Brize Norton, the air base used by those returning from deployment around the world, including Iraq, there are two free machines to facilitate easy access to cash as soon as the troops reach the UK. There are no machines that are accessible by officers only.

Information on cash machines at other property owned, rented or otherwise used by the Ministry of Defence, is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Chinook HC2 Helicopter

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will place all *(a)* documents, *(b)* e-mails and *(c)* memoranda (i) produced and (ii) received by his Department concerning technical faults discovered in the Chinook HC2 helicopter in the Library; [210373]

(2) on how many occasions in each year since 1990 reviewing officers' conclusions differed from those of the President of an RAF Board of Inquiry. [210640]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Civil Servants (Opposition Policy)

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library all factual material produced by civil servants in his Department relating to the costing of policies and pledges of Opposition parties since 1997. [206698]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 21 December 2004]:* Officials are occasionally asked to provide factual information to allow Opposition party policies to be costed. Such work is carried out in accordance with the guidance set out in Volume One of the Directory of Civil Service Guidance.

Since 1997, examples have included information to support costing of Opposition policies for defence in Scotland in 1999, Conservative policies on increases in the size of the regular Army and the Territorial Army in 2000 and Conservative policies on changes to the infantry structure in 2004.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on (i) improving the reliability of cluster munitions and (ii) finding militarily-adequate alternatives to cluster munitions; and if he will make a statement. [200298]

Mr. Ingram: No research has been commissioned in respect of air launched cluster munitions as they are gradually being withdrawn from service over the next five years. Recent statistics show an overall failure rate which is in line with expectations. For Ground Launched systems, the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) is due to be replaced by the future GMLRS Area Effects Munition (AEM) with a planned in service date of early 2007. The new system has bomblets fitted with a self destruct faze giving a failure rate of less than 1 per cent. Whilst the Shell 155mm HE L20A1 Extended Range Bomblet Shell (ERBS) has a maximum failure rate of 2 per cent. at the 95 per cent. confidence level the bomblet fuze has a self destruct mechanism. Analysis shows that for a significant percentage of likely targets the bomblet remains the most effective munition.

Disposal Services Agency

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts have been signed by his Department's Disposal Services Agency in the calendar year 2004 for equipment directly sold on a government-to-government basis; and if he will list *(a)* the equipment concerned and *(b)* the country to which it has gone or is going. [208779]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency (DSA) signed contracts with the Dutch Air Force for one ex-Qinetiq Hercules aircraft (to be delivered in 2005) and with the Norwegian Defence Forces for a quantity of Stingray torpedoes and depth charges (delivered in December 2004).

The DSA also signed contracts in 2004 for the supply of equipment to Jordan. These equipments have been sold in support of the Al Hussein Project, which has been established under an inter-governmental memorandum of understanding to facilitate the transfer of ex-MOD surplus Challenger 1 Tank assets. All of the following are sales agreements for support equipments:

Quantity	*Equipment*
2	Surplus Jones IF8 Wheeled Workshop Cranes (delivered in December 2004)
20	Surplus Chieftain Armoured Repair and Recovery Vehicles (19 to be delivered between October and December 2004 and the DSA plans to ship the last vehicle in March/April 2005)
6	Surplus M578 Tracked Cranes and a package of surplus spares and support equipment (export of these six items will be subject to US Government approval—delivery probable 2005)

Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether he intends to invite BAE Systems to underwrite the through life costs of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer; [204832]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the in-service date for the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer; [204833]

(3) what the main provisions of the gain share agreement between his Department and BAE Systems in respect of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer are; [204834]

(4) what design changes the Integrated Project Team for the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer proposes to make; [204836]

(5) what he expects the through life costs of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer to be. [204837]

(6) when he expects to sign the contract for the *(a)* development phase and *(b)* production phase of the Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer. [204838]

Mr. Ingram: We expect the Hawk 128 Advanced Jet Trainer aircraft to cost approximately £3.5 billion "Through Life", which amounts to some 20 years. The aircraft will be procured conventionally and paid for by the taxpayer, therefore there is no requirement for BAE Systems to underwrite the Through Life Costs (TLC).

The Ministry of Defence and BAE Systems have defined and agreed a mature Hawk 128 aircraft specification. We do not envisage any significant design changes to the specification during the Design and Development phase.

Gain share incentivises a Company to reduce costs and in return receive financial benefit. This information is commercially sensitive and it would be inappropriate to comment further.

The Design and Development Contract (DDC) was awarded to BAE Systems. on 22 December 2004. Final aircraft numbers, delivery schedule and In-Service Date will all be set at the main investment decision point which is planned for Spring 2006. at which time approval will be sought to place a Production Contract.

Interceptor Missiles

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Her Majesty's Government have made a decision regarding the stationing of interceptor missiles in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [210412]

Mr. Hoon: No request has been made and no decision is necessary.

Iraq

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK doctors are working in *(a)* detention centres and *(b)* prison centres in Iraq. [209282]

Mr. Ingram: The only United Kingdom detention facility in Iraq is the military Divisional Temporary Detention Facility (DTDF) in Basrah. There is one military doctor allocated full-time to the DTDF. We do not hold information about UK civilian doctors or other detention facilities in Iraq.

Military Exercises (Deaths)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel have been killed while on military exercises in each of the last three years. [205922]

Mr. Caplin: Between 1 January 2001 and 31 December 2003 (the last three years for which validated figures are held), nine Service personnel have died from injury or poisoning-related causes whilst on military exercises. Of these, six died in 2001, two in 2002 and one in 2003.

Procurement Budget

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 574W, on the procurement budget, how the figure of £300 million is comprised; from what sources he has calculated that figure; and if he will make a statement. [209953]

Mr. Ingram: Our estimate that some £300 million annually is saved to the defence procurement budget has been constructed using information received from the defence industry on the value of export orders won, and on the share of fixed overhead costs in defence exports. Defence exports comprise services as well as goods, and the estimate also reflects an assumption that the value of non-equipment exports contain no fixed overhead costs.

Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by what means he communicated his decision to disband the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment to serving officers and men. [208829]

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps were taken to inform members of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment that they would be disbanded in advance of the commanding officer's televised announcement. [209193]

Mr. Ingram: As the professional head of the Army, the Chief of the General Staff had responsibility for communicating the decision to disband the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment down the chain of command. On the morning of the announcement, the Chief of the General Staff personally telephoned the Colonel Commandant of the Prince of Wales's Division and, in this instance, also the Colonel of the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire

Regiment to inform them of the decision and pending announcement. This was then relayed to the rest of the regiment by the Regiment's Commanding Officer.

Submarines

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many submarines are in service in the Royal Navy; and what the age is of each vessel. [210311]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy has four Vanguard class (SSBN) and 11 Swiftsure and Trafalgar class (SSN) submarines in service. Based on their in service dates the age of each boat in 2005 is as follows:

	Years
HMS Vanguard	12
HMS Victorious	10
HMS Vigilant	9
HMS Vengeance	6
HMS Sovereign	31
HMS Superb	29
HMS Sceptre	27
HMS Spartan	26
HMS Trafalgar	22
HMS Turbulent	21
HMS Tireless	20
HMS Torbay	18
HMS Trenchant	16
HMS Talent	15
HMS Triumph	14

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Boscastle

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance the Government has (i) made available and (ii) promised to the community of Boscastle in Cornwall following the flood last year; and if she will make a statement. [209781]

Mr. Morley: Defra has overall policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk in England. Defra funds most of the Environment Agency's flood management activities in England and provides grant aid on a project by project basis to the other flood and coastal defence operating authorities (local authorities and internal drainage boards) to support their investment in improvement projects to manage flood and coastal erosion risk.

The Government are assisting, in whatever ways they can, local efforts to help the community of Boscastle recover from the flooding on 16 August.

A Bellwin scheme of emergency financial assistance to North Cornwall District Council (NCDC) has been announced by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) in respect of the immediate action the Council took to safeguard life and property and the clear up costs it has incurred. NCDC has submitted a claim and the ODPM made an interim payment on 20 January 2005.

Business Link (operated by the Small Business Service, an Agency of the DTI) is providing a dedicated Business Adviser to Boscastle for a 12 month period and has made arrangements to cover interest and administration charges for any affected small or medium-sized enterprise requiring additional bank borrowing as a consequence of the floods.

The Government Office for the South West, Regional Development Agency, Business Link and other local agencies are working through a Boscastle Regeneration Steering Group to consider and address the short and longer term regeneration needs of the community and support for its businesses. Objective 1 funding has been offered towards a £20,000 Framework Plan commissioned by North Cornwall District Council for the regeneration needs of the area and £93,000 towards a £300,000 tourism recovery initiative.

Bovine TB

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest figures are for the incidence of bovine TB, broken down by holding. [211080]

Mr. Bradshaw: Bovine tuberculosis surveillance data are not available on a holding basis. However, detailed TB statistics, broken down by county in areas of high TB incidence, or by Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) in other areas, are published each month on the Defra website at:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/stats/index.htm

The published data include the number of TB herd breakdowns in each county or AHDO area.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the devolved administrations concerning the content, frequency and timing of television advertisements placed by her Department on UK-wide satellite television channels. [201322]

Alun Michael: Defra has never placed television advertisements on UK-wide satellite television channels.

Environmental Scheme Costs

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the fees charged for the administration and supervision of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [209846]

Mr. Morley: The subsistence charging amendments to the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme Regulations went out to consultation in October last year (22 October–3 December). Approximately 30 responses from companies have been received. Defra will be publishing a response to some of the questions raised on its website shortly, and the consultation responses will be made available in the Defra library in due course.

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs or what reasons she does not envisage a level playing field for the implementation of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for shipping and aviation. [202198]

Mr. Morley: We do envisage a level playing field for intra-EU aviation flights and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. As outlined in the 2003 Air Transport White Paper, "The Future of Air Transport", the Government are actively pursuing the inclusion of intra-EU aviation in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and progress on this policy will be a priority for the UK Presidency of the EU in 2005. If the UK is successful, it is hoped that intra-EU aviation could be included within the second phase of the Scheme, from 2008 or soon after.

Dealing with all matters maritime, including emissions from ships, is a competence at IMO (the International Maritime Organisation). The nature of international shipping is such that it needs to be treated very differently to all other modes of transport. This is important, as most ships are registered outside of the EU (e.g. Panama). We continue to lobby member states of the IMO to tackle this issue. To date this has met with little success, as the political discussions surrounding environment issues are often blocked outright.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the EU Emissions Trading Scheme will enter into force. [209848]

Mr. Morley: The Greenhouse Gas Emissions Trading Scheme Regulations (2003) state:

> "No person shall carry out a Schedule 1 activity resulting in specified emissions after 1 January 2005, except under and to the extent authorised by a greenhouse gas emissions permit."

UK Regulators have issued about 1,150 permits, and conditions under those permits require installations covered by the Scheme to monitor and report their emissions of carbon dioxide.

Farm Payments

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to publish proposals for the public disclosure of Common Agricultural Policy payments at a farm level; and if she will make a statement. [208024]

Alun Michael: Requests for information about subsidy payments made to farmers in the past will be considered by the Rural Payments Agency. In reaching a decision account will have to be taken of the resource implications of gathering the information and of assessing the balance between the public interest and the commercial or privacy implications for the subject. We are still considering these implications in light of requests received and hope to be able to make the position clear in the near future.

For the new single payment we are minded to publish information as a matter of course, when it becomes available, but we are still considering the options for doing so.

Farm Plastics Recycling Schemes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farm plastics recycling schemes are in place. [211079]

Mr. Morley: Currently, there is one recycling scheme for farm plastics in place to my knowledge. However, Chapter 8 of the consultation paper on the draft Waste Management (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 discusses the introduction of a voluntary or statutory producer responsibility scheme for the collection and recovery of non-packaging plastic waste from farms. The consultation paper was published on 9 December 2004 and is available in the Library of the House and on my Department's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/agwaste-regs/index.htm. Views are invited by 18 March 2005. Plastic packaging waste from farms and elsewhere is already the subject of the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended).

Freedom of Information

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures she has put in place to respond to requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to disclose the level of EU and domestic support made available to individual agricultural producers and landowners. [208265]

Alun Michael: Requests for information about subsidy payments made to farmers in the past will be considered by the Rural Payments Agency. In reaching a decision account will have to be taken of the resource implications of gathering the information and of assessing the balance between the public interest and the commercial or privacy implications for the subject.

For the new single payment, being introduced this year, we are minded to publish information as a matter of course but we are still considering the options for doing so.

Global Dimming

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the dampening effects of global dimming on mean temperatures *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* worldwide. [210973]

Mr. Morley: Aerosol pollution cools the climate and partially offsets some of the warming due to greenhouse gases but we don't know with certainty by how much. Defra's Climate Prediction Programme at the Hadley Centre has been investigating the impacts of aerosol on climate change and the risks of acceleration of climate change for some time. Good climate models already include the effects of aerosol and look at how climate change could be affected if the whole range of uncertainty in aerosol is included in model calculations. The result is an increase to the uncertainty range of climate sensitivity both globally and in the UK.

The climate change could therefore be greater than previously thought, with changes in global temperature of up to10°C by 2100, compared to 6°C as represented by the IPCC. However, this is based on the highest emissions scenario, so should be seen as being at the extreme end of the projected range of future climate change.

Growth Antibiotics

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the consumption of antibiotics used to promote farm animal growth was in England in the most recent year for which figures are available. [210845]

Mr. Bradshaw: The VMD collects and publishes figures annually on the UK sales of veterinary antimicrobials, including those sold for use as growth promoters. It is reasonable to assume that there is a close correlation between these figures and the quantities used in the UK. The figures are supplied by the manufacturers on a voluntary basis. The reports are available on the VMD website at www.vmd.gov.uk under the publications and general tabs or from Dr. Kay Goodyear (telephone 01932 338409).

The most recent figure for sales of antimicrobial growth promoters in the UK is 36 tonnes of active ingredient in 2003.

Lead Pipes

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many lead water supply mains and pipes have been replaced since 2000; [208879]

(2) how many kilometres of water distribution mains have been renovated since 2000 to reduce problems associated with discolouration of water. [208883]

Mr. Morley: To deal with water quality problems, including discolouration, water companies renovated 15,460 kilometres of water distribution mains between 2000 and the end of 2003.

Water companies no longer have lead water supply mains. They replaced some 314,000 lead communication pipes between 2000 and the end of March 2004. The communication pipe is the water company owned section of pipe which conveys water from the supply main to the curtilage of a consumer's premises where it connects to the consumer's supply pipe.

Metered Water

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households within the Greater London area use metered water. [211048]

Mr. Morley: Figures on water customers are collected by water company supply area, not by administrative area. The Office of Water Services (Ofwat) forecast is that 656,500 households who are customers of Thames Water will have a metered water supply in 2004–05.

Mobile Phone Masts

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will discuss with mobile telephone operators the potential for using mobile phone masts to disseminate warnings of severe weather or other disasters that require localised warning messages. [209140]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is responsible for developing and operating the service to warn of possible flooding from watercourses and the sea in England.

It is technically feasible to use mobile phone network providers to disseminate localised warning messages, but certain agreements and procedures would be required. I understand the agency is discussing this possibility with mobile phone network providers.

Additionally, the agency will introduce Floodline Warnings Direct later this year. The £9.4 million warning system will enable the agency to use a range of new channels and technologies to simultaneously warn more homeowners, businesses, emergency services and local authorities of the threat of flooding.

It will be the country's first multi-channel warning system and will exploit current and emerging technologies to deliver warning messages simultaneously via telephone, mobile phone, pager, e-mail and fax and, in due course, SMS text messaging, digital TV and radio.

Members of the public who choose to receive the new service will be able to elect to receive warning messages via their mobile phones (voice and/or text) if they provide the agency with their contact numbers.

Nuclear Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what volume of *(a)* low level, *(b)* intermediate level and *(c)* high level nuclear waste has gone missing in each of the last five years; and what percentage has been recovered. [210270]

Mr. Morley: None.

An inventory of UK radioactive waste stocks is produced periodically by my Department. The latest edition was published in 2002 providing information on sources, quantities and properties of waste stocks as of 1 April 2001. Work on a 2004 inventory is currently under way.

Oil Contamination

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of oil leaks on land in each of the last four years contaminated *(a)* sources of drinking water and *(b)* water used for recreation; what requirements exist to report such occurrences; what powers exist to require remedial action to be taken; and what the estimated cost was to public funds of such occurrences. [210356]

Mr. Morley: With respect to the proportion of oil leaks on land over the last four years, these data are not available. However, the Oil Care Campaign has commissioned research (sponsored by the oil industry) to review all sources of information on the causes of oil pollution. The conclusions of this work, including provisional data for 2004, are due for publication in the next two months.

There are no general requirements for such spillages to be reported, although the Environment Agency (EA) encourages their reporting and has an emergency hotline for this purpose. In addition, the water companies are required to notify the Drinking Water Inspectorate of any incident which affects drinking water quality or where there may be a risk to consumers' health. This includes all instances of chemical contamination including oil leakage/spillage.

The EA has the power to serve a Works Notice in order to prevent the immediate threat of water pollution or to ensure that remedial action is taken following an incident. However, in most cases, the necessary action is secured without recourse to the formal issuing of a notice.

The estimated cost of such incidents to public funds is not readily available. However, the EA expects to be able to provide some indicative costs at the same time as the incident data.

Pheasants

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the change in use of large moveable pens for the rearing of pheasants following the removal of the chemical DMZ; and whether these pens are subject to *(a)* planning permission and *(b)* business rates. [207308]

Mr. Bradshaw: DMZ (dimetridazole) is the active ingredient in an antiprotozoal that was indicated for use in game birds for blackhead. Its use in food producing animals was banned by the European Commission for food safety reasons. An alternative way to prevent blackhead is to change husbandry practices such as rearing each year's birds on new pasture. We have not made any assessment of the changes made by producers to help prevent blackhead. Defra is not responsible for the rules governing planning permission and business rates.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what expenditure was made by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* agencies for which her Department is responsible on research projects by companies with headquarters in (i) the UK, (ii) other EU member states and (iii) non-EU states in each year since 2001–02. [206989]

Alun Michael: The Department does not keep this level of information on the organisations at which it funds research.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much and what percentage of her Department's expenditure went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [207004]

Alun Michael: The figures are:

	Defra R&D funding (£ million)	*Percentage of total Defra expenditure*
2001–02	144	3.1
2002–03	144	3.5
2003–04	146	3.4

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many research and development procurement opportunities were disseminated by the Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative in each year since 2001–02 to date; and what the value of such opportunities was in each case. [207011]

Alun Michael: Defra fully supports the Small Business Research Initiative and all Defra research competitions are open to small businesses. Since 2002–03, when Defra began recording this information, our records show that we have funded research with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (both as main contractor and sub-contractor) as follows:

	Number of SMEs	*Value (£)*
2002–03	93	2,893,756
2003–04	53	3,131,117
2004–05 (Incomplete)	14	2,734,526

Fairshare Scheme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 713W, on tax credits, whether the fareshare scheme, previously funded under the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme, is eligible for funding under the Waste Implementation Programme; and if she will make a statement. [210978]

Mr. Morley: In November I announced details of the Community Sector Support Programme, which is being administered by the Waste Implementation Programme. This funding package includes one year of grant support in 2005–06 for projects dealing with municipal waste, for which the deadline for applications was 4 January.

Wood Waste

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken to divert wood from landfill to *(a)* coal-fired and *(b)* non-coal burning power stations. [210895]

Mr. Morley: The Government are committed to reducing the UK's reliance on landfill, in order to reduce its environmental impact and because landfilling is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste. This commitment applies to waste wood as it does to any other waste material. Using wood as a fuel in power stations is one alternative to disposal in landfills and, under the forthcoming review of the Renewables Obligation, the case for amending eligibility rules regarding electricity generated from mixed wastes, including wood, will be considered.

There are other ways of diverting wood from landfill, such as re-using or recycling it as a raw material in construction or for manufacturing wood based products. To encourage this, wood is one of the priority materials under the Government-funded Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which was established to create markets for recycled materials. By 2006 WRAP are aiming for a 150,000 tonne increase in the recycling of waste wood into added-value end markets.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the amount of wood which is disposed of in landfill sites; and what action she plans to take to reduce that amount. [210896]

Mr. Morley: The Government have no basis for estimating the amount of wood being disposed of in landfills. However, they are committed to reducing the UK's reliance on landfill, in order to reduce its environmental impact and because landfilling is a missed opportunity to recover value from waste. This commitment applies to wood as it does to any other waste material. As a result, the Government encourage the re-use or recycling of wood as a raw material in construction or in manufacturing wood based products or used as a fuel, rather than being sent to landfill. In particular, wood is one of the priority materials under the Government-funded Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which was established to create markets for recycled materials. By 2006 WRAP are aiming for a 150,000 tonne increase in the recycling of waste wood into added-value end markets.

PRIME MINISTER

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the occasions when his special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees. [210504]

The Prime Minister: Alastair Campbell, my former Director of Communications and Strategy, gave evidence to the Public Administration Select Committee on 23 June 1998 and to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee on Wednesday 25 June 2003.

WALES

Dental Services

9. **Hywel Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales when he plans to meet the new Minister for Health and Social Services of the National Assembly for Wales to discuss dental services in Wales. [209965]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Congleton (Ann Winterton). As I said then, I have already met the Assembly's new Health Minister and we plan to have further meetings and discussions in the coming weeks.

Pupil Referral Units

10. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his secretaries in the National Assembly for Wales on the availability of pupil referral units in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [209966]

Mr. Touhig: I regularly meet Assembly Ministers to discuss a range of issues, including education.

Data for Wales indicate a significant rise in the number of referral unit places and pupils. The number of pupil referral units has risen from 24 in 1997 to 31 in 2004 and the number of pupils registered in the units has also risen from 49 to 1,058 in the same timescale.

Manufacturing Industry

11. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the state of the manufacturing industry in Wales. [209967]

Mr. Hain: Manufacturing remains subject to intense global competitive pressures but, despite this, the sector in Wales still makes an important contribution to the Welsh economy accounting for 21 per cent. of Gross Value Added and employing around 180,000 people, or 16 per cent. of the workforce.

Child Trust Fund

13. **Mrs. Lawrence:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on the implementation of the child trust fund in Wales. [209969]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues, including the Child Trust Fund. The Chancellor and the Assembly First Minister have met with the Child Poverty Tax Group and End Child Poverty Network to discuss ways of ensuring the CTF makes a maximum contribution to tackling child poverty in Wales.

Pensioner Poverty

14. **Ann Clwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on tackling pensioner poverty in Wales. [209970]

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on tackling pensioner poverty in Wales. [209963]

Mr. Touhig: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues including tackling pensioner poverty in Wales.

The Government are tackling pensioner poverty with an extra £10 billion to be spent on pensioners in 2005–06. The Assembly is also making £10 million available to 2006–07 for its strategy for Older People in Wales. The strategy will plan for an ageing society and improve services for older people in Wales.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207818]

Mr. Touhig: The Freedom of Information Act does not make specific categories of information available, but operates on the presumption that all information held by public authorities should be available, subject to the 24 exemptions of the Act.

Whether or not information is exempt under the Act requires the exercise of judgment in each case. The majority of the exemptions also require that the public interest in releasing the information should be weighed against the public interest in withholding it. If the public interest in disclosing the information outweigh the public interest in withholding it the information must be disclosed. The assessment of the public interest has to be made in all the circumstances of the case, on a case by case basis as far as each request is concerned.

Welsh Economy

Gareth Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the effects of the Chancellor's proposals in the pre-Budget report on the economy in Wales. [209968]

Mr. Hain: Regular ones. As a result of the pre-Budget report, an additional £38.5 million will be invested in Wales, measures to improve skills, productivity and entrepreneurship and Council tax support.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Questions

Paul Holmes: To ask the Leader of the House from which Government agencies letters in response to parliamentary questions are *(a)* published in *Hansard* and *(b)* placed in the Library; and what criteria are applied in deciding which answering mechanism should be used. [210337]

Mr. Hain: All letters from Government Agencies in response to parliamentary questions should be sent to the *Official Report* for printing, unless they contain personal or confidential information. If the letter is longer than the *Official Report* would normally publish (a maximum of four A4 pages in length in material received), notification will be printed that the response is available in the Library of the House. The response will be available to Members in the Library and on application to the House of Commons Information Office.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

CPS Prosecutions (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor General how many prosecutions were undertaken by the Crown Prosecution Service in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend-on-Sea in each year since 1997; and how many resulted in (i) conviction and (ii) acquittal. [209473]

The Solicitor-General: Cases prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service do not all conclude in a conviction or an acquittal. The difference between the number of defendant files prosecuted and the number of defendants resulting in conviction or acquittal will reflect the defendants that did not proceed to trial or conviction. They will be classed under the Area's performance figures as defendant cases resulting in a discontinuance or discharged committal, or defendants that are on a warrant or have been written off.

Cases undertaken by CPS Essex since 1997

	Number of defendants prosecuted	*Number of defendants convicted*	*Number of acquittals*
1997	28,829	21,186	803
1998	28,918	21,954	854
1999	29,098	21,722	919
2000	25,761	19,123	733
2001	26,440	20,657	603
2002	26,931	20,842	633
2003	27,570	21,064	870
2004 (to September)	28,499	23,367	1,049

Cases undertaken by Southend-on-Sea Criminal Justice Unit since 1997

	Number of defendants prosecuted	*Number of defendants convicted*	*Number of acquittals*
1997	6,051	4,408	86
1998	6,169	4,673	97
1999	6,228	4,665	88
2000	5,573	4,135	86
2001	5,958	4,845	62
2002	4,534	3,643	50
2003	5,150	4,108	71
2004 (to September)	6,111	5,142	127

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Palestine

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of Palestinian economic regeneration. [210700]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Prospects for Palestinian economic regeneration are bleak unless the underlying causes of economic decline and poverty are addressed. The Government of Israel need to ease the system of restrictions on the movement of people and goods imposed since the beginning of the "intifada". The Palestinian Authority also needs to invigorate its programme of governance reforms in order to create an internal environment more attractive to private investors. The UK is working closely with international partners on both these issues. Economic issues will be a key theme of the London meeting on 1 March. This will be an opportunity to support the new Palestinian leadership in strengthening its institutional capacity and will also help stimulate progress on the Road Map towards a settlement which will allow the Palestinian economy to grow again.

TRANSPORT

Concessionary Travel

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will estimate the number of pensioners eligible for free bus passes and travel; and what percentage of the pensioner population this represents. [208970]

Charlotte Atkins: In England, there are five areas where older people (men and women aged 60 and over) are offered free concessionary travel on local bus services. These are the London boroughs, Merseyside, Crawley, Redditch and Thurrock. Reading and the West Midlands offer free local bus travel to residents aged 65 and over. Free local bus travel is also offered by Bournemouth and Plymouth to residents aged 80 and over and by Rossendale to residents aged 90 and over.

We estimate that 1.96 million older people are eligible for free bus travel in these areas, representing 18.9 per cent. of older people in England. The remaining 8.42 million older people in England are entitled to at least the statutory half-fare minimum requirement on bus services, with no charge for the pass, though local authorities can offer more generous schemes and many provide concessions between half fares and free travel, such as flat fares. There are 9.19 million pensioners in England (men aged 65 and over, women aged 60 and over) of which 1.79 million are eligible for free local bus travel. This represents 19.4 per cent. of pensioners in England.

Some other authorities offer the choice of free travel with a charge for the annual concessionary travel pass as an alternative to the statutory minimum half fare with a free annual pass. Some local authorities also extend their concessionary fare schemes to cover other forms of public transport—including the free schemes in the London boroughs, Merseyside, and Crawley and the partially free scheme in the West Midlands.

Figures are based on Office of National Statistics 2003 population estimates.

DVLA (Fines)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fines were issued to drivers for failing to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency about a change of address in each of the last five years. [210165]

Mr. Jamieson: The offence of failure to notify a change of address or personal details is normally taken into account as part of investigations into other more serious driving and traffic offences.

Any penalties subsequently imposed by courts for major offences may incorporate a penalty for non-notification, but the court statistics only record the prime offence(s). There are no statistics available for this specific offence of failure to notify changes.

Some 2.7 million replacement driving licences are issued annually by DVLA in response to notifications from drivers of changes to their personal details.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on energy costs incurred by his Department in each of the last two years. [202413]

Charlotte Atkins: Pursuant to my answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1094–96W the revised energy costs recorded by the Department for the periods 2002–03 and 2003–04 are as follows:

£

	Electricity		*Gas*		*Oil*		*Total*	
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
DfT HQ	311,833	323,395	18,578	23,436	0	0	330,411	346,831
AAIB	9,300	8,900	0	0	9,500	8,800	18,800	17,700
MAIB	3,606	5,132	506	730	0	0	4,112	5,862
DSA	268,270	293,902	90,982	104,005	3,253	2,591	362,505	400,498
DVLA	560,399	557,518	120,693	129,053	0	0	681,092	686,571
HA	387,801	229,094	58,897	53,497	29	4,164	446,727	286,755
MCA	475,400	492,906	96,404	106,421	45,451	25,939	617,255	625,266
VCA	11,698	6,848	1,321	1,628	4,014	3,664	17,033	12,140
VOSA	425,828	402,869	113,067	134,937	75,099	46,524	613,994	584,330
Total	2,454,135	2,320,564	500,448	553,707	137,346	91,682	3,091,929	2,965,953

Overall the decrease in costs from 2002–03 to 2003–04 is 4 per cent. although the figures for costs alone can be misleading if not placed within the wider context of changes in unit price, areas measured, levels of consumption and improved record keeping. The DfT estate comprises some 1,680 properties of varying size, use and nature of occupation and is therefore not possible to make any comprehensive or definitive statements about energy cost changes on such a diverse estate, which may be attributable to these and other factors.

Increases and decreases in unit charges and area occupied can also mask efforts to improve energy efficiency so a better measure of performance is consumption at those properties where energy monitoring is both possible and carried out where the overall usage was down 2.2 per cent. over the same period. For more details on consumption I would refer the hon. Member to my answer of 20 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 687–88W to the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green).

The Department will continue to aim to reduce energy consumption and meet other energy targets set out in the Framework for Sustainable Development in the Government Estate.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206679]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided relates only from the years 2002–03 onwards.

The Department's running costs for the items requested are shown in the following table:

£000

	2002–03			2003–04		
Running cost type	*DfT central*	*Agencies*	*Total*	*DfT central*	*Agencies*	*Total*
Electricity	324.7	2,129.4	2,454.1	337.4	1,983.1	2,320.5
Water	17.5	525.5	543.0	37.6	506.5	544.1
Gas	19.1	481.4	500.5	24.2	529.5	553.7
Telephones	2,644.3	6,051.4	8,695.7	1,529.3	7,886.6	9,415.9
Mobile telephone	79.4	386.6	466.0	111.8	440.9	552.7
Television	11.1	1.8	12.9	11.2	2.2	13.4
Total	3,096.1	9,576.1	12,672.2	2,051.5	11,348.8	13,400.3

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207813]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Railways

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate his Department has made of the likely growth in passenger numbers on the rail network over the next *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years, broken down by (i) national rail network, (ii) First Great Western franchise area and (iii) First Great Western Link franchise area. [210440]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the form requested. The Strategic Rail Authority's (SRA) "Capacity Utilisation Policy: Network Utilisation Strategy" document, published in June 2003, states that their planning assumption is that demand growth between 2001–02 and 2010–11 will be in the region of 20–30 per cent. The SRA's "Great Western Main Line Route Utilisation Strategy" consultation document, published in January, states that overall passenger growth for the Great Western Main Line area is forecast to be around 18 per cent. between 2002–03 and 2011–12.

Roads

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library advice which he received from *(a)* the Highways Agency and *(b)* departmental officials on determining priorities between road schemes, prior to his recent announcements on road spending. [208216]

Mr. Jamieson: We have no plans to do so at present.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208622]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is as follows:

Department for Transport and the Agencies

Name	*Organisation*	*Role*
David Sterland	British Airways	Project management role to co-ordinate the preparation. monitoring and evaluation of a package of agreed. prioritised and strategic aviation and maritime security bids to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global Opportunities Fund.
Mike Lloyd	Mercer Management Consulting	Providing economic advice on all Railways Economy issues. particularly franchising, strategy. 10-year plan review and West Coast Mainline.
Nick Joyce	Ernst & Young	Corporate finance adviser.

Single-hulled Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to ban single-hulled tankers from operating in UK coastal waters; and if he will make a statement. [208686]

Mr. Jamieson: The UK has played a key role in both the International Maritime Organisation (MO) and the EU in negotiating an acceleration of a programme to phase out single hull tankers from world trade, while ensuring continuity of energy supply. The IMO has recently agreed to an accelerated programme, under which the large majority of single hull tankers will have been phased out by the end of 2010. Single hull tankers which will be under 25 years of age at the end of 2010 will be allowed to continue in service until the end of 2015, or on reaching age 25 if earlier, but only if they first pass a rigorous assessment of their condition. Based on the IMO agreement, there is a EU Regulation, now in force, which prohibits single hull tankers entering or leaving EU ports and anchorages when carrying heavy grades of oil as cargo.

The United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea, to which the UK acceded in 1997, gives rights of innocent passage though territorial waters for ships which comply with internationally agreed standards governing their construction and use, which includes single hull tankers which have yet to reach their phase out date. Secretary of State has no powers to curtail such rights, which benefit UK ships when participating in world trade.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Child Abuse

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what duties are placed on *(a)* headmasters and *(b)* governors of independent schools to report suspicions of child abuse by members of staff. [210441]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: The duty to report suspicions of child abuse by members of staff in independent schools is placed on proprietors rather than head teachers and governors. Proprietors are required to make a report to my Department when they have ceased to use a person's services, or when a person has ceased to provide their services, on grounds that they are unsuitable to work with children, on grounds of misconduct, or on grounds relating to the person's health where issues are raised about the safety or welfare of children.

Proprietors of independent schools have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at their school and must ensure that their school has procedures for dealing with allegations of abuse against staff which comply with locally agreed inter-agency procedures.

Childminders

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* registered childminders and *(b)* registered childminder places were available in 2004. [210747]

Margaret Hodge: At 31 December 2004 the numbers of registered childminders and registered childminder places in England were 71,000 and 318,100 respectively.

Statistics on the number of childcare places registered in England were published on 19 January 2005 in a report by Ofsted "Registered Childcare Providers and Places in England, 31 December 2004". The report is available on the Ofsted website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* childminders and *(b)* childminder places were registered in Stoke-on-Trent in 2004. [210860]

Margaret Hodge: At 31 December 2004 the numbers of registered childminders and registered childminder places in Stoke on Trent local education authority area were 300 and 1,300 respectively.

Statistics on the number of child care places registered in England were published on 19 January 2005 in a report by Ofsted "Registered Childcare Providers and Places in England, 31 December 2004". The report is available on the Ofsted website, www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of her Department's staff is based in London. [208036]

Derek Twigg: Information on regional distribution of staff is available in the Libraries of both Houses, and also at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management information/statistical_information/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2003_report/index.asp

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution. Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2005.

DES/EU Co-operation

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions her Department has had with the European Commission on the supporting, co-ordinating and complementary action that may be taken by the EU in the field of vocational training under article I-17 of the proposed EU constitution. [209585]

Dr. Howells: None. The Treaty has not yet been ratified by the United Kingdom and several other member states and is therefore not yet in force.

Education Funding

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on *(a)* higher and *(b)* further education in Stoke on Trent in each year since 1997. [209911]

Dr. Howells: Public funding for Staffordshire university from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is shown in the first table.

Recurrent funding for Staffordshire university[1, 2, 3]

£000

		Of which:		
	Recurrent funds for teaching and research[4]	*Teaching*	*Research*	*Funds for rewarding and developing staff*[5]
1997–98	28,479	27,832	647	—
1998–99	32,908	32,189	719	—
1999–2000	34,020	33.182	838	—
2000–01	36.393	35.481	912	—
2001–02	39,001	37,256	905	841
2002–03	40,185	38,123	820	1,242
2003–04	41,565	39.232	609	1,724
2004–05	41,083	40.512	572	—

[1] HEFCE is not able to provide data on funding allocated in respect of students ordinarily resident in Stoke on Trent.

[2] HEFCE data is provided for Staffordshire university and its partner colleges in the Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF), who are funded by HEFCE through the university. The figures therefore include funding not just for Staffordshire university's Stoke campus and Stoke-on-Trent College, but for the university's other campuses in Stafford and Lichfield and its various partner FE Colleges across Staffordshire and Shropshire. We are not able to disaggregate funding for these constituent parts as the university and its partners are funded as a single entity through a block grant.

[3] Funding figures show HEFCE recurrent grant for teaching and research only. They exclude other HEFCE grants such as for capital and other special initiatives. They also exclude funding from other public sources, such as the NHS, TTA, LSC, research councils etc.

[4] Constituent parts may not add to total due to rounding.

[5] Funding for rewarding and developing staff was first allocated for 2001–02 and transferred into teaching grant in 2004–05.

Source:
HEFCE

In addition HEFCE provided £549,987 of recurrent funding for teaching to Stoke on Trent college in 1999–2000. From 2000–01 onwards this was transferred to the HE provision for Staffordshire university.

Data on public expenditure paid to students at Staffordshire university and Stoke on Trent college by the Student Loans Company (SLC) in respect of grants, income-contingent loan cash outlay, and tuition fees for academic years 1999/2000 to 2004/05 (provisional) are shown in the second table. Data are not available at the level requested prior to academic year 1999/2000.

SLC expenditure on grants[1,2], income-contingent loan cash outlay[3], and tuition fees[4] paid to students studying at Staffordshire university and Stoke on Trent college[5] Academic years 1999/2000 to 2004/05 (provisional)

£ million

Academic year	*SLC expenditure*
1999/2000	24.6
2000/01	34.2
2001/02	34.7
2002/03	32.2
2003/04	31.8
2004/05[6]	28.9

[1,2] Up to and including academic year 2003/04, data on grant expenditure for student support scheme students relates to additional allowances/grants available to eligible students for extra help depending on their circumstances, e.g. students with disabilities, students with dependents, single parent students, those incurring certain travel costs, and those who have recently left care. In addition, data for 2004/05 include expenditure on the Higher Education grant which was introduced for new students in 2004/05 to help cover the cost of participating in Higher Education.

[3] Students domiciled in England and Wales.

[4] Students domiciled in England, Wales and the EU.

[5] Data also include planned expenditure.

[6] Provisional (as at 19 January 2005)

Data on public expenditure for mortgage style loans, hardship loans, part-time fee grants and part-time course grants are not readily available at the level requested. I will include details of these expenditures in the House of Commons Library when available.

Data on discretionary funding at Staffordshire University Regional Federation (SURF) are shown in the third table.

Discretionary funding at SURF[1,2] from 1997/98 to 2004/05

£000

	Hardship/ access to learning fund	*Fee waivers*	*Opportunity bursaries*	*Support for access administration*
1997/98	234.6	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998/99	524.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999/2000	833.4	n/a	n/a	n/a
2000/01	842.4	33.8	n/a	35.7
2001/02	960.4	36.1	148.0	28.2
2002/03	909.3	54.2	208.5	28.9
2003/04	802.3	74.1	309.0	[3]—
2004/05	765.2	6.2	174.0	[3]—

n/a = not applicable.

[1] Data include funding for Staffordshire university's Stoke campus, Stoke-on-Trent college and the university's other campuses in Stafford and Litchfield and its various partner FE colleges, all of which are funded by HEFCE through the university.

[2] As lead institution, Staffordshire university receive discretionary funding for all of the members of the consortium and the consortium decide how the allocation is administered.

[3] From 2003/04 administration funding was paid as an integral part of the Access to Learning Fund allocation.

There are two Further Education colleges located within the parliamentary constituency of Stoke on Trent Central, namely Stoke on Trent college and the City of Stoke on Trent sixth form college. Public funding for these from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and its predecessor the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) is shown in the fourth table.

£ million

Academic year	*Stoke-on-Trent college*	*City of Stoke-on-Trent sixth form college*
1997/98	18.0	4.3
1998/99	18.1	4.4
1999/2000	19.0	4.8
2000/01	20.8	5.8
2001/02	20.6	5.5
2002/03	22.7	5.7
2003/04	25.9	5.5
2004/05	27.7	6.0

Notes:

1. These figures represent allocations of funding for FE provision that was actually paid (but may have been adjusted subsequently for under or over performance) and do not include any non-FE funding that the colleges may have received.
2. The LSC was established in April 2001 and prior to that the FE sector was administered by the FEFC.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the real-term funding guarantee for *(a)* school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* further education colleges is in the 2004–05 financial year; and if she will make a statement. [210750]

Dr. Howells: In the academic year 2004/05, the Learning and Skills Council increased its funding rates by 4 per cent. for school sixth forms, in line with the per pupil guarantee funding increase for schools. Funding rates for sixth form colleges and further education colleges meeting their targets increased by 5 per cent. in 2004/05.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will instruct the Learning and Skills Council to fund school sixth forms and further education colleges at the same level for capital investment projects. [210751]

Dr. Howells: Capital funding for school sixth forms is part of the devolved funding for schools which the local education authority administers.

Capital funding for further education colleges is the responsibility of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which has sole discretion in how and where it allocates capital support.

In our five-year strategy we set out plans to establish a new 16–19 capital fund combining school and further education resources to support coherent investment in new 16–19 provision.

The fund is expected to come into effect from 2006–07, and will be administered by the LSC.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the level of funding available to further education colleges to implement the Increased Flexibility Programme for 14 to 16-year-olds. [210756]

Dr. Howells: The Department allocates funding to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to deliver the Increased Flexibility Programme. Funding of up to £100,000 per partnership has been made available to support activity in 2004–06. The allocation of funding is decided locally between the partners.

The Department has not assessed the funding available to partnerships to implement the Increased Flexibility Programme, but the LSC has commissioned a study into this. Mark Haysom, the LSC's chief executive, will write to the hon. Member with details of the study. A copy of his letter will be placed in the House Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the per capita funding for 16 to 18 year olds in Stoke-on-Trent was in *(a)* school sixth forms, *(b)* the sixth form college and *(c)* other further education colleges in each of the past five years. [210863]

Dr. Howells: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-six learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council. The Department does not collect information on the level of per capita funding for 16 to 18 year olds in school sixth forms and sixth form and further education colleges at the local level. Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's Chief Executive will write to the hon. Member with details of the level of per capita funding for 16 to 18 year olds in *(a)* school sixth forms *(b)* sixth form colleges and *(c)* further education colleges in each of the past five years in the Stoke-on-Trent area. A copy of his letter will be placed in the House Library.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years are in receipt of education maintenance allowance in each institution in the Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Learning and Skills Council area. [210744]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: EMA is available in 2004–05 to eligible young people aged 16 on 31 August 2004 in the Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire LSC area. As at 19 January 2005 3,260 young people in the Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire LSC area had received an EMA payment.

A document showing how many young people are receiving EMA in individual educational institutions in Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire LSC area is shown in the table:

EMA students by School/College[1]

LEA name	*SCL ID*	*SCL Description*	*Number of enrolments*
Buckinghamshire	110484	Buckingham School	19
Buckinghamshire	110485	John Hampden Grammar School	21
Buckinghamshire	110488	The Grange School	27
Buckinghamshire	110489	Princes Risborough	16
Buckinghamshire	110490	The Misbourne School	21
Buckinghamshire	110491	John Colet School	17
Buckinghamshire	110492	Quarrendon Upper School	8
Buckinghamshire	110493	Burnham Grammar School	18
Buckinghamshire	110494	Aylesbury High School	36
Buckinghamshire	110495	Dr. Challoner's High School	13
Buckinghamshire	110496	Sir Henry Floyd Grammar School and Performing Arts College	29
Buckinghamshire	110497	Mandeville Upper School	29
Buckinghamshire	110499	Holmer Green Senior School	11
Buckinghamshire	110500	Cressex Community School	23
Buckinghamshire	110501	Burnham Upper School	11
Buckinghamshire	110504	Chesham High School	21
Buckinghamshire	110505	The Beaconsfield School	15
Buckinghamshire	110506	Sir William Ramsay School	18
Buckinghamshire	110508	The Wye Valley School	11
Buckinghamshire	110509	The Amersham School	26
Buckinghamshire	110510	Chesham Park Community College	10
Buckinghamshire	110511	Aylesbury Grammar School	23
Buckinghamshire	110512	Royal Latin School	35
Buckinghamshire	110513	Wycombe High School	36
Buckinghamshire	110514	Dr. Challoner's Grammar School	18
Buckinghamshire	110515	Sir William Borlase's Grammar School	12
Buckinghamshire	110516	St. Bernard's Catholic School	15
Buckinghamshire	110528	Beaconsfield High School	16
Buckinghamshire	110529	The Chalfonts Community College	26
Buckinghamshire	110530	The Royal Grammar School High Wycombe	26
Buckinghamshire	110533	The Cottesloe School	14
Buckinghamshire	110534	Waddesdon Church of England School	32
Buckinghamshire	110535	Great Marlow School	26
Buckinghamshire	110542	Holy Cross Convent School	1
Buckinghamshire	110548	Stowe School	6
Buckinghamshire	110573	Alfriston School	1
Buckinghamshire	110581	Park School	4
Buckinghamshire	110582	Heritage House School	1
Buckinghamshire	110585	Furze Down School	8
Buckinghamshire	130607	Aylesbury College	159
Buckinghamshire	130608	Amersham and Wycombe College	260
Buckinghamshire	133586	Penn School	1
Milton Keynes	110487	Ousedale School	53
Milton Keynes	110498	Denbigh School	42
Milton Keynes	110502	Leon School and Sports College	31
Milton Keynes	110517	St. Paul's Catholic School	58
Milton Keynes	110526	Stantonbury Campus North	69
Milton Keynes	110531	Lord Grey School	35
Milton Keynes	110532	The Radcliffe School	41
Milton Keynes	110567	Bury Lawn School	2
Milton Keynes	110575	White Spire School	7
Milton Keynes	110587	Slated Row School	12
Milton Keynes	110592	The Redway School	3
Milton Keynes	130609	Milton Keynes College	333
Milton Keynes	131185	Shenley Brook End School	20

EMA students by School/College[1]

LEA name	*SCL ID*	*SCL Description*	*Number of enrolments*
Milton Keynes	131396	Walton High	36
Oxfordshire	123231	Chipping Norton School	28
Oxfordshire	123232	Banbury School	57
Oxfordshire	123233	Bicester Community College	28
Oxfordshire	123235	Burford School and Community College	22
Oxfordshire	123237	The Henry Box School	28
Oxfordshire	123238	Wood Green School	18
Oxfordshire	123239	Bartholomew School	18
Oxfordshire	123241	Gosford Hill School	40
Oxfordshire	123242	Peers School	20
Oxfordshire	123243	Wheatley Park School	33
Oxfordshire	123251	The Cherwell School	38
Oxfordshire	123252	Oxford Community School	30
Oxfordshire	123253	Cheney School	29
Oxfordshire	123255	Larkmead School	17
Oxfordshire	123256	John Mason School	14
Oxfordshire	123257	Fitzharrys School	14
Oxfordshire	123258	Matthew Arnold School	17
Oxfordshire	123259	St. Birinus School	20
Oxfordshire	123260	Didcot Girls' School	31
Oxfordshire	123261	Wallingford School	18
Oxfordshire	123262	Faringdon Community College	11
Oxfordshire	123263	King Alfred's Community and Sports College	49
Oxfordshire	123267	The Marlborough Church of England School	22
Oxfordshire	123268	Lord Williams's School	47
Oxfordshire	123270	Blessed George Napier School	8
Oxfordshire	123277	Kingham Hill School	3
Oxfordshire	123278	Sibford School	3
Oxfordshire	123282	The Oratory School	1
Oxfordshire	123283	Cokethorpe School	2
Oxfordshire	123285	Shiplake College	6
Oxfordshire	123290	Headington School	11
Oxfordshire	123298	Our Lady's Convent Senior School	8
Oxfordshire	123310	Oxford High School GDST	4
Oxfordshire	123311	Magdalen College School	2
Oxfordshire	123312	Abingdon School	9
Oxfordshire	123313	The School of St. Helen and St. Katharine	7
Oxfordshire	123318	d'Overbroeck's College	2
Oxfordshire	123331	Swalcliffe Park School Trust	2
Oxfordshire	130789	The Henley College	160
Oxfordshire	130793	Abingdon and Witney College	169
Oxfordshire	132406	European School of Culham	1
Oxfordshire	133430	St. Clare's Oxford	1
Oxfordshire	133644	St. Gregory the Great VA Catholic Secondary School	31
Oxfordshire	134153	Oxford and Cherwell College	319
Total EMA students			3,260

[1] Data to 19 January 2005

Education, Youth and Culture Council

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the Government's priorities for the Education, Youth and Culture Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [209555]

Dr. Howells: The Operational Programme of the Council for 2005 submitted by the incoming Luxembourg and United Kingdom Presidencies and based on the Multi-Annual Strategic Programme for 2004–06 sets out priority areas of work in all policy areas, including education, youth and culture. A copy of the Annual Operation Programme for 2005 is available in the Library of the House.

The focus of the programme is on the on-going handling of EU business. What will fall to the UK Presidency depends on the progress made by the Council, European Parliament and Commission under the Luxembourg Presidency. The programme reflects the main UK Presidency objectives and provides the basis for us to take forward our priorities.

Key issues for the UK Presidency generally are likely to include progressing the delivery of the Lisbon agenda of more and better jobs, sustainable economic growth and greater competitiveness. In the Education part of the Council, we will aim to make good progress on the proposed new Integrated Lifelong Learning programme 2007–13. We will also begin work on the preparation of a report to the 2006 Spring European Council on the implementation of the detailed work programme 2010 for education and training systems agreed at Barcelona in spring 2002. In the Youth part of the Council, we will continue our negotiations on the Youth in Action programme for 2007–13. In the Culture and Audiovisual part of the Council, we will seek to move towards agreement on the proposed new culture programmes (2007–13) and the new Media programmes (2007–13). We will also seek to make progress on priority initiatives flowing from the new Culture Council work plan, in particular those on digitisation of cultural heritage and mobility of museum collections. In addition, we will take forward the preparatory work for a review of the Television without Frontiers ("TVWF") directive.

Free Nursery Places

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Hartlepool have benefited from free nursery places since the policy was introduced. [210649]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Hartlepool local education authority area is shown in the table.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up 3 and 4-year-olds, Hartlepool local education authority area

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Position in January each year	Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	Total 3-year-olds	Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[4]	Total 4-year-olds
1997	1,100	n/a	1,100	n/a	n/a	[7]1,200
1998	1,200	n/a	1,200	n/a	n/a	[7]1,300
1999	1,200	n/a	1,200	n/a	n/a	[7]1,200
2000	1,100	[5]40	1,100	n/a	n/a	[7]1,000
2001	960	[5]30	1,000	n/a	n/a	[7]1,100
2002	930	[6]90	1,000	1,100	[7]20	1,100
2003	930	[6]80	1,000	1,100	20	1,100
2004	950	[6]100	1,000	1,100	20	1,100

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Stoke-on-Trent have taken up free nursery places in each year since the policy was introduced. [210865]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four year olds in Stoke on Trent local education authority Area is shown in the table.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up by 3 and 4-year-olds, Stoke on Trent local education authority area

	3-year-olds			4-year-olds		
Position in January each year	Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	Total 3-year-olds	Maintained nursery and primary schools[3]	Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers	Total 4-year-olds
1997	1,200	n/a	1,200	n/a	n/a	[6]3,100
1998	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[6]3,000
1999	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[6]2,900
2000	2,000	[4]290	2,300	n/a	n/a	[6]2,800
2001	1,800	[4]370	2,200	n/a	n/a	[6]2,800
2002	1,600	[4]450	2,100	2,800	[6]90	2,900
2003	1,600	[5]640	2,300	2,700	[6]90	2,800
2004	1,600	[5]600	2,200	2,600	[7]100	2,700

n/ a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[7] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* three and *(b)* four-year-old children in Nottingham, North attended nursery in (i) 1997 and (ii) the most recent period for which figures are available. [211020]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Nottingham, North parliamentary constituency and Nottingham City local education authority area is shown in the tables. Information for private and voluntary providers is available for Nottingham City but not for Nottingham, North.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places[1,2] taken up 3 and 4-year-olds in maintained nursery and primary schools Nottingham, North parliamentary constituency area 1997and 2004

		Maintained primary schools		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery schools*	*Nursery classes*	*Other classes[3]*	*Total*
3-year-olds				
1997	0	850	0	850
2004	0	900	10	920
4-year-olds				
1997	0	1,300	170	1,400
2004	0	800	360	1,200

[1] Headcount of children aged three and four at 31 December in the previous calendar year.

[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[3] Includes reception classes and classes not designated as nursery classes.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Number of free nursery education places[1] taken up three and four-year-olds Nottingham City local education authority area 1997 and 2004

Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2,4]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total*
3-year-olds			
1997	1,800	n/a	1,800
2004	2,200	[3]700	2,900
4-year-olds			
1997	n/a	n/a	[5]3,900
2004	2,800	[6]400	3,200

n/a = Not available.

[1] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 or 100 as appropriate.

[2] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many three and four-year-olds in Stoke on Trent have benefited from the scheme guaranteeing a free part-time nursery place. [209908]

Margaret Hodge: All four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Stoke on Trent local education authority area is shown in the table.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 39/2004 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004 (final)", which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/.

Number of free nursery education places taken up 3 and 4-year-olds—Stoke on Trent local education authority area

	3-year-olds			*4-year-olds*		
Position in January each year	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[1]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers*	*Total 3-year-olds*	*Maintained nursery and primary schools[2]*	*Other maintained and private, voluntary and independent providers[3]*	*Total 4-year-olds*
1997	1,200	n/a	1,200	n/a	n/a	[4]3,100
1998	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]3,000
1999	2,000	n/a	2,000	n/a	n/a	[4]2,900
2000	2,000	[5]290	2,300	n/a	n/a	[4]2,800
2001	1,800	[5]370	2,200	n/a	n/a	[4]2,800
2002	1,600	[5]450	2,100	2,800	90	[4]2,900
2003	1,600	[6]640	2,300	2,700	90	2,800
2004	1,600	[6]600	2,200	2,600	100	2,700

n/a = Not available.

[1] Headcount of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[2] Headcount of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Annual Schools' Census.

[3] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

[4] Part-time equivalent number of children aged four at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[5] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Nursery Education Grant data collection exercise.

[6] Part-time equivalent number of children aged three at 31 December in the previous calendar year from the Early Years Census and the Annual Schools' Census.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by her Department in the last three years. [207828]

Derek Twigg "The Freedom of Information Act" does not make specific categories of information available, but operates on the presumption that all information held by public authorities should be available, subject to the 24 exemptions of the Act.

Whether or not information is exempt under the Act requires the exercise of judgement in each case. The majority of the exemptions also require that the public interest in releasing the information should be weighed against the public interest in withholding it. If the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in withholding it the information must be disclosed. The assessment of the public interest has to be made in all the circumstances of the case, on a case by case basis as far as each request is concerned. Therefore it is not possible to provide the information requested.

Higher Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of pupils went on to higher education from *(a)* maintained school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges, *(c)* further education colleges and *(d)* special schools in the last year for which figures are available. [210190]

Dr. Howells: Information is not available on the numbers of pupils from different establishment types who went on to higher education. However, the Youth Cohort Study, which tracks a sample of young people from the year after they have finished compulsory education until the age of 19, can provide estimates of percentages from certain establishment types.

Of the cohort of students who took their GCSEs in 1999, the proportion from each establishment type who were in higher education in either spring 2002 or spring 2003 were as follows:

Establishment	*Percentage*
School sixth forms	59
Sixth form Colleges	59
Further education colleges	32

Information is not available on those from special schools.

Non-resident Parents

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines have been issued on how much time a non-resident parent should have with their children. [210229]

Margaret Hodge: The Government do not provide guidelines specifying how much time non-resident parents should have with their children. The Government believe that children benefit from a meaningful relationship with both parents following divorce or separation, where it is safe to do so. The Children Act 1989 supports this and, most importantly, it makes the welfare of the child concerned, rather than the rights of the parents, its paramount consideration.

In 2002 the Government published the Parenting Plans which contained a checklist of issues for parents to consider in making contact arrangements. We are currently developing a new edition of the Plans. The new Parenting Plans will contain a set of templates which seek to show parents the sort of contact arrangements that work well for children of different ages and who are living in a range of circumstances. They will describe, in practical terms, arrangements that are generally beneficial for children. They are intended to be used as practical aids, both by parents themselves and by solicitors, conciliators and mediators, to help parents to reach reasonable agreements. These will be made widely in solicitors' offices as well as through advice and mediation services.

NotSchool Project

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many participants there are in the NotSchool project; and how many are entered for formal accreditation. [210181]

Dr. Howells: There are currently 553 participants ("researchers") in the NotSchool.net project of statutory school age, and an additional 18 at post-16.

Last academic year (2003–4) 98 per cent. of researchers achieved a formal accreditation, and current indications suggest a similar figure will be reached this academic year.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting her Department. [208928]

Derek Twigg: My Department provides 660 car parking spaces at it's four Headquarter sites. The breakdown is as follows:

Site	*Staff (includes spaces for disabled)*	*Visitors*
Darlington	265	9
Sheffield	176	24
Runcorn	143	6

London has 37 car parking spaces and apart from spaces allocated for disabled staff the remainder are assigned to both staff/visitors according to availability.

Post-16 Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were in post-16 education in each *(a)* local education authority and *(b)* learning and skills council area in the most recent period for which data are available; and what the participation rates were in each area in that period. [210183]

Dr. Howells: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children migrated *(a)* into and *(b)* out of each (i) local education authority and (ii) learning and skills council area to attend a 16–19 education establishment in the last period for which figures are available. [210184]

Dr. Howells: 16 to 19-year-olds attend a range of establishments—schools, FE colleges, work-based learning providers. There is some harmonisation of the data collected—which allows the Department to report on participation rates. However, that harmonisation does not stretch to analyses about learners migrating into and out of LEA and LSC areas.

As the information regarding 16 to 19-year-olds who attend maintained secondary schools with sixth forms is contained in a number of large tables, I have placed the tables in the House of Commons Library.

Additionally, it is possible to analyse LSC funded Further Education by migration across boundaries.

This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to the hon. Gentleman with the information requested and to place a copy of his reply in the Library.

Post-graduate Certificate

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of applicants for Post-Graduate Certificate in Education courses in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary teaching obtained either a first or an upper second class honours degree in the latest period for which figures are available. [209791]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record and is given in the table.

Proportion of Entrants[1] to Post Graduate Certificate in Education courses at English HEIs with a 1st or upper 2nd class honours degree, 2003/04

Phase of Education	*Number with 1st or upper 2nd class honours degree*	*Percentage with 1st or upper 2nd class honours degree[2]*
Primary[3]	4,295	57
Secondary[4]	7,945	57
Further Education[5]	640	37
Other [5]	15	53
Total of known phase of education	12,895	55
Unknown	75	n/a
Total	12,970	n/a

[1] Figures are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December 2003.

[2] Percentages are based upon those of known first degree classification. Those students with unknown degree classification and those students who do not hold a UK undergraduate degree are excluded.

[3] Includes those studying to teach "Foundation stage and Key Stage 1 (KS1) (ages 3–8)", "KS1 and KS2 (ages 3–11)" and "KS1 and KS2 (ages 5–11)".

[4] Includes those studying to teach "KS2 and KS3 (ages 7–14)", "KS3 and KS4 (ages 11–16)", "KS3, KS4 and post-16 (ages 11–18)" and "KS4 and post-16 (ages 14–19)".

[5] Includes students on courses not leading to qualified teacher status.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

School Governors

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of a school's governing body is required to be filled by parent governors for *(a)* community, *(b)* foundation, *(c)* voluntary aided, *(d)* voluntary controlled and *(e)* academy schools; and whether the proportion has changed since 1997. [211072]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Before the introduction of the Education Act 2002 the number of each category of school governor on a school's governing body was fixed according to the type and size of school.

Governing bodies can now choose their own size and the proportion of membership of the various stakeholder groups with an interest in the school: parents, staff, the local authority, the community, and the school's foundation body if it has one; in accordance with guiding principles. In all categories of maintained schools parents must constitute at least one third of the total governing body membership. This compares favourably with the proportion of governors of maintained schools required to be parents in 1997. The Academies programme was launched in March 2000 and the first Academies opened in 2002. Academies have different governance arrangements to maintained schools. Their Funding Agreements have required that at least one parent governor is represented on the Governing Body.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the people working within her Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208628]

Derek Twigg: There are currently no people from the private sector working in the Department.

Sixth Form Colleges

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many sixth form colleges have been *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [210178]

Dr. Howells: Since 1997, we have incorporated three new sixth form colleges in the FE sector, one of which was the result of the merger of two existing sixth form colleges. A further six sixth form colleges have been dissolved, with their property, rights and liabilities transferred to other FE sector colleges.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children with a statement of special educational needs have transferred from *(a)* mainstream schools to special or independent schools and *(b)* independent or special schools to mainstream schools in each year since 1997. [210752]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: The requested information is given in the table.

All children for whom local education authorities maintain statements of special educational needs—England

	Children with statements who transferred:	
Children with statements who transferred during	*from mainstream schools to special or independent schools*	*from special or independent schools to mainstream schools*
1997	4,030	870
1998	4,390	1,020
1999	4,510	1,140
2000	4,770	1,090
2001	5,250	1,150
2002	4,860	1,020
2003	5,100	1,230

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

SEN2 Survey

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils with special educational needs are participating in 16–19 education in *(a)* maintained school sixth forms, *(b)* sixth form colleges, *(c)* further education colleges and *(d)* special schools. [210189]

Margaret Hodge: The available information relates to maintained school sixth forms and special schools only and is given in the table.

Assessments of Special Educational Needs are not made outside schools in the LSC funded post-16 learning sector. So, it is not possible to provide figures on a consistent basis for sixth form colleges and further education colleges.

Maintained secondary schools and all special schools[1]: Number of pupils in sixth forms by stage of special educational need (SEN)[2]—As at January 2004, England

	Pupils in year groups 12 to 14			
		Special schools		
	Secondary schools	*Maintained*	*Non-maintained*	*Total*
No special provision	324,330	10	80	90
School action	6,530	[3]—	0	[3]—
School action plus	1,920	40	10	50
Total number of SEN pupils without statements	8,450	40	10	50
Number of pupils with statement of SEN	2,510	7,020	860	7,880
Total	335,280	7,070	950	8,020

[1] Excludes general hospital schools.

[2] Full-time equivalent number of pupils in year groups 12, 13 or 14. Includes dually registered pupils.

[3] Less than 5.

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209582]

Derek Twigg: The following table gives the advertising costs for civil servants recruited to work within my Department for financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04:

£

	Central recruitment relating to Grades AA-Grade 6	*Senior civil service recruitment*
2001–02	187,890.24	111,266.54
2002–03	134,016.11	256,669.66
2003–04	124,026.77	170,603.38

Student Loan Company

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent representations she has received regarding problems with the Student Loan Company; and if she will make a statement. [210000]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State received a representation dated 5 January from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Withington (Mr. Bradley), on behalf of a constituent whose children received delayed student loan payments. I am going to reply, as I have ministerial responsibility for student support, to explain that this is now administered through a new system called "Protocol", aimed at improving the administration of the system and in particular streamlining the application and assessment process. However, as with any new system, there were initial difficulties to overcome and we are now reviewing with the Student Loans Company what worked well and what could be improved.

Sure Start

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what the total expenditure on Sure Start was in each year that the scheme has been in operation; [210054]

(2) what proportion of the budget for Sure Start was spent on administration in each year that the scheme has been in operation. [210059]

Margaret Hodge: The information is as follows:

	Total expenditure (£ million)	*Proportion spent on administrative costs*[1] *(percentage)*
1999–2000	7	15
2000–01	56	4
2001–02	134	3
2002–03	216	2
2003–04	718	2

[1] Administrative costs comprises of salaries and general office administration costs for all activities undertaken by the wider Sure Start Unit, including its regional teams.

The expenditure data quoted for 1999–00 to 2002–03 relate to Sure Start Local Programmes only (the Sure Start "Scheme").

During 2002, Sure Start merged with the Early Years and Childcare Functions and as a consequence, only combined data are available from 2003–04.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what funding has been allocated to Stoke-on-Trent under the Sure Start scheme in each of the past three years; [210859]

(2) what the total expenditure on Sure Start in Stoke-on-Trent has been in each year since the scheme has been in operation; [210956]

(3) how many children have participated in Sure Start in Stoke-on-Trent in each year since the scheme has been in operation. [210871]

Margaret Hodge: There are six Sure Start local programmes in Stoke-on-Trent: Stoke North, Blurton, Longton South, Abbey Bucknall, Shelton Cobridge and Bentilee.

Some £6.25 million of capital funding has been allocated to these programmes over the last three years.

The amount of revenue funding allocated to these programmes since they began totals £14.67 million and is broken down as follows: 1999/2000—£0.14 million (Stoke North only); 2000/01—£1.07 million (Stoke North only); 2001/02—£1.48 million (Stoke North and Blurton only); 2002/03—£2.83 million (all current programmes except Bentilee); 2003/04—£4.49 million; 2004/05—£4.66 million.

The figures for numbers of children participating in these Sure Start local programmes are available on a consistent basis only for the period from September 2002 to September 2004. Across these programmes, an average of 28 per cent. or 1,392 of the children aged four or under in the areas covered by the programmes were seen by their local programme in each quarter in 2002–03 and an average of 29 per cent. or 1,556 of the children in each quarter in 2003–04.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will include as part of the BBC charter renewal review consideration of allowing the BBC to continue developing its commercial activities in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* overseas. [209792]

Tessa Jowell: Every aspect of the BBC will be considered as part of Charter review. This will include the Corporation's commercial activities both in the UK and overseas.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206793]

Mr. Caborn: 72 criminal offences were created in legislation sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 sessions. A list of these criminal offences, broken down by Act, has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Country Information Policy Unit Reports

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who compiles the information in the Home Office Country Information Policy Unit reports that are referenced by asylum adjudicators and Home Office officials; and what their research and professional qualifications are. [210764]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office Country Information and Policy Unit (CIPU) is staffed by generalist civil servants. Although aptitude for research is an important element in selection of staff, it has not been considered necessary to staff the unit with professionally qualified researchers. This is because CIPU does not undertake "primary" research. The country information material it produces is "secondary" research—identifying and providing a summary of primary research carried out by others.

The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) has recommended that CIPU's research skills be strengthened by the introduction of professional research staff who would have supervisory, control and monitoring tasks in the preparation of Country Reports and other country information outputs. This recommendation is being addressed in the context of the reorganisation of CIPU's functions that I announced on 8 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 119WS.

Animal Experiments

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of trends in the number of animal experiments in the UK; and if his Department will take steps to reduce the number of experiments. [208820]

Caroline Flint: Trends in the number of animal experiments over the last few decades are recorded in the publication Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals, Great Britain 2003-Cm 6291, available in the Library—The Stationery Office Belfast publishes separate figures for animal experiments conducted in Northern Ireland. This shows that the number of scientific procedures using animals started in Great Britain in 2003—the latest year for which data are available—was just over 2.79 million, a rise of about 59,000 (2.2 per cent.) compared with 2002.

There has overall been a significant reduction in the annual number of such scientific procedures since the 1970s and 1980s, but in recent years this trend has more or less levelled out. It is impossible to predict future trends, as many variable factors are involved.

Reduction in experiments in particular programmes of work are achieved through implementation of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, which can be licensed only if the number of animals used is minimised. More generally the Government and the scientific community are continuing efforts to try to bring down the overall amount of animal experimentation, including through establishment of the UK National 3Rs centre and working with relevant international bodies.

Asylum Seekers

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Ministers were first advised that the target of 30,000 removals of failed asylum seekers in 2001–02 was unachievable. [206165]

Mr. Browne: Ministers were advised in July 2002 that the target had been revised.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many adults were tagged as an alternative to detaining asylum seeking families at the latest date for which figures are available; [206245]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of asylum-seeking families expected to be monitored through tagging by May 2005. [206246]

Mr. Browne: At 17 January 2005 nobody has been tagged as an alternative to detaining asylum-seeking families.

A pilot to test three types of monitoring: voice recognition, tagging and tracking commenced in October 2004. The pilot will run until March 2005 when results will be evaluated. Subjects for the tagging pilot (40 in total) are being identified. The number of asylum-seeking families we expect to monitor through tagging during the pilot will depend on risk assessments carried out in individual cases. The number is unlikely to be high as the pilot is limited in numbers and in the majority of cases family members are detained only for a relatively short period immediately prior to removal.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of Afghan asylum seekers received *(a)* refugee status and *(b)* another form of protection from the UK Government in each quarter since 1997. [210515]

Mr. Browne: The table shows initial decision and appeal determinations by quarter, where available, for Afghan asylum applicants, 1997 to Q3 2004. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and appeal outcomes do not necessarily relate to initial decisions made in the same period.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 will be available on the 22 February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Initial decisions[1] on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004—Nationals of Afghanistan

	Cases considered under normal procedures							Backlog clearance exercise				
	Total initial decisions	Grants of asylum		Grants of ELR, HP and DL[2]		Total refusals		Total backlog clearance exercise	Backlog clearance ELR[3,4]		Backlog clearance refusals[3,5]	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%
Q1 1997	230	10	3	210	91	15	6	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1997	190	5	2	160	83	30	16	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1997	160	5	2	135	84	25	14	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1997	150	5	3	135	91	10	6	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 1998	335	5	2	290	87	40	12	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1998	355	5	1	345	97	5	1	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1998	640	10	2	620	97	10	1	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1998	270	15	5	245	90	15	5	—	—	—	—	—
1999[6]	1,295	15	1	1,180	91	90	7	10	10	100	—	0
Q1 2000	265	15	5	80	30	170	64	5	5	100	—	0
Q2 2000	370	30	8	120	32	220	59	5	5	100	—	0
Q3 2000	480	40	8	100	21	335	70	*	*	100	—	0
Q4 2000	1,470	290	20	395	27	785	53	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2001	4,475	810	18	2,650	59	1,015	23	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2001	3,035	655	22	1,830	60	550	18	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2001	2,415	550	23	1,360	56	505	21	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2001	2,440	310	13	1,655	68	475	20	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2002	3,045	35	1	2,395	79	610	20	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2002	2,180	20	1	1,710	78	450	21	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2002	1,765	30	2	520	29	1,215	69	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2002	1,190	30	2	145	12	1,020	86	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2003[7]	1,265	10	1	205	16	1,050	83	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2003[7]	1,250	15	1	120	9	1,115	89	—	—	—	—	—

Initial decisions1 on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004—Nationals of Afghanistan

	Cases considered under normal procedures							Backlog clearance exercise[6]				
	Total initial decisions	Grants of asylum		Grants of ELR, HP and DL[2]		Total refusals		Total backlog clearance exercise	Backlog clearance ELR[3,4]		Backlog clearance refusals[3,5]	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%
Q3 2003[7]	790	5	1	110	14	670	85	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2003[7]	675	10	1	125	18	545	80	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2004[7]	565	10	2	110	20	445	78	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2004[7]	700	5	1	75	11	620	88	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2004[7]	980	10	1	125	13	845	86	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave replaced exceptional leave to remain from 1 April 2003.

[3] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre "96 act asylum backlog.

[4] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[5] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

[6] Annual data only available,

[7] Provisional figures.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of Iraqi asylum seekers received *(a)* refugee status and *(b)* another form of protection from the UK Government in each quarter since 1997. [210516]

Mr. Browne: The tables show initial decision and appeal determinations by quarter, where available, for Iraqi asylum applicants, 1997 to Q3 2004. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and appeal outcomes do not necessarily relate to initial decisions made in the same period.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 will be available on the 22 February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Initial decisions[1] on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004—Nationals of Iraq

	Cases considered under normal procedures							Backlog clearance exercise				
	Total initial decisions	Grants of asylum		Grants of ELR, HP and DL[2]		Total refusals		Total backlog clearance exercise	Backlog clearance ELR[3,4]		Backlog clearance refusals[3,5]	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%
Q1 1997	155	55	35	80	51	20	14	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1997	180	60	34	80	45	40	21	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1997	190	70	36	80	43	40	22	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1997	140	70	51	55	41	10	8	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 1998	105	55	53	40	39	10	8	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1998	225	110	48	95	42	20	10	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1998	410	180	44	195	48	30	8	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1998	360	170	47	165	46	25	7	—	—	—	—	—
1999[6]	735	315	42	320	43	100	14	5	5	86	*	14
Q1 2000	795	140	18	535	67	120	15	—	—	0	—	0
Q2 2000	1,775	340	19	1,220	69	215	12	5	5	80	*	20
Q3 2000	1,345	235	18	625	46	485	36	5	5	100	—	0
Q4 2000	1,605	125	8	80	5	1,400	81	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2001	3,340	250	8	400	12	2,690	81	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2001	2,055	200	10	390	19	1,470	71	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2001	1,920	185	10	515	27	1,220	63	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2001	1,715	195	17	585	34	935	55	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2002	2,595	230	9	1,455	56	910	35	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2002	2,565	195	8	1,785	69	585	23	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2002	3,085	150	5	2,265	73	665	22	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2002	3,660	135	4	2,690	73	835	23	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2003[7]	2,955	65	2	2,105	71	785	27	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2003[7]	355	5	1	5	1	350	98	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2003[7]	1,805	*	0	15	1	1,790	99	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2003[7]	1,690	*	0	30	2	1,660	98	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2004[7]	1,640	5	0	70	4	1,570	96	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2004[7]	1,230	—	0	20	2	1,210	98	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2004[7]	1,460	—	0	45	3	1,415	97	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave replaced exceptional leave to remain from 1 April 2003.

[3] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre-1996 Act asylum backlog.

[4] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[5] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

[6] Annual data only available.

[7] Provisional figures.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of asylum seekers from Somalia received *(a)* refugee status and *(b)* another form of protection from the UK Government in each quarter since 1997. [210517]

Mr. Browne: The tables show initial decision and appeal determinations by quarter, where available, for Somalia asylum applicants, 1997 to Q3 2004. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and appeal outcomes do not necessarily relate to initial decisions made in the same period.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 will be available on the February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Initial decisions[1] on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004—Nationals of Somalia

		Cases considered under normal procedures					
		Grants of asylum		*Grants of ELR . HP and DL[2]*		*Total refusals*	
	Total initial decisions	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Q1 1997	505	5	1	405	81	90	18
Q2 1997	205	55	26	*	0	150	73
Q3 1997	535	145	27	335	63	55	10
Q4 1997	1,065	780	73	275	26	10	1
Q1 1998	1,040	705	68	320	31	15	2
Q2 1998	510	450	89	30	6	25	5
Q3 1998	760	710	94	15	2	35	4
Q4 1998	495	465	94	10	2	20	4
1999[6]	310	130	37	55	16	120	35
Q1 2000	915	415	45	310	33	190	21
Q2 2000	6,845	3,790	55	2,680	39	375	5
Q3 2000	1,910	660	34	410	21	840	43
Q4 2000	1,585	450	28	180	11	960	60
Q1 2001	2,695	1,035	38	600	22	1,060	39
Q2 2001	1,780	740	41	470	26	575	32
Q3 2001	1,860	460	25	475	26	920	50
Q4 2001	2,100	675	32	455	22	970	46
Q1 2002	1,765	675	38	480	27	610	35
Q2 2002	1,455	585	40	340	24	530	36
Q3 2002	1,775	655	37	390	22	730	41
Q4 2002	1,745	605	35	190	11	950	54
Q1 2003[7]	2,025	685	34	160	8	1,180	58
Q2 2003[7]	1,220	410	34	90	7	720	59
Q3 2003[7]	1,370	390	28	130	9	850	62
Q4 2003[7]	1,435	180	12	175	12	1,085	75
Q1 2004[7]	1,265	115	9	160	13	990	78
Q2 2004[7]	845	115	14	120	14	610	72
Q3 2004[7]	595	100	17	90	15	410	69

		Total backlog clearance exercise			
		Backlog clearance ELR[3, 4]		*Backlog clearance Refusals[3, 5]*	
	Total backlog clearance exercise	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Q1 1997	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1997	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1997	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1997	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 1998	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 1998	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1998	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1998	—	—	—	—	—
1999[6]	40	35	83	5	17
Q1 2000	5	5	57	5	43
Q2 2000	25	15	71	5	29
Q3 2000	40	35	85	5	15
Q4 2000	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2001	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2001	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2001	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2001	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2002	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2002	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2002	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2002	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2003[7]	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2003[7]	—	—	—	—	—

		Total backlog clearance exercise			
		Backlog clearance ELR[3, 4]		Backlog clearance Refusals[3, 5]	
	Total backlog clearance exercise	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Q3 2003[7]	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2003[7]	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 2004[7]	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2004[7]	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2004[7]	—	—	—	—	—

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[2] Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave replaced exceptional leave to remain from 1 April 2003.

[3] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre 1996 act asylum backlog.

[4] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[5] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

[6] Annual data only available.

[7] Provisional figures.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many cases lesbian and gay applicants have been refused asylum in the last five years on the grounds that they will not be persecuted if they return to their home countries and hide their sexuality. [210624]

Mr. Browne: Asylum applications are decided on an individual case by case basis. Information on how many cases have been refused asylum on the grounds that they will not be persecuted because of their homosexuality is not available and could therefore be available only by examination of individual case records.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum applicants have won refugee status in the UK in the last five years on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution because of their homosexuality. [210765]

Mr. Browne: Asylum applications are decided on an individual case by case basis. Information on how many cases have been granted asylum on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution because of their homosexuality is not available and could be available only by examination of individual case records.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of asylum applicants in 2004 claiming a well-founded fear of persecution because of their homosexuality were refused asylum. [210766]

Mr. Browne: Asylum applications are decided on an individual case by case basis. Information on how many cases have been refused asylum on the basis of a well-founded fear of persecution because of their homosexuality is not available and could be available only by examination of individual case records.

Botox

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will eliminate the LD50 test as a regulatory instrument for the safety and potency testing of Botox, in favour of in-vitro methods; and if he will make a statement. [209075]

Caroline Flint: Botox is the trade name for one of the products containing botulinum toxin. International and UK regulations concerning safety and efficacy of medicines require testing for botulinum toxin products at various stages of their processing, from harvesting through to marketing as a finished product for use as a prescription-only medicine.

The Home Office and all others concerned with conducting and regulating such testing are committed to moving to less severe testing procedures as soon as it becomes practicable to do so. The laboratories involved in ensuring that botulinum toxin products are safe for therapeutic use (the only use for which animal tests are licensed) are already gaining expertise in non-animal methods to this end.

The European Pharmacopoeia states that the potency of the toxin as a reconstituted product is determined by an LD50 assay in mice (the reference method), or by a method validated with respect to the LD50 assay. Unfortunately there is at present no accepted and validated alternative to the LD50 test for determining the potency of botulinum toxin at the production stage. Other methods, including an in vitro test, can additionally be employed, and are being used, for example when confirmatory assay of potency is needed.

Under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 only the test method which causes the least animal suffering, while achieving the scientific objective, can be licensed in the UK. This means that in vitro tests must be used wherever possible and, when there is no non-animal alternative, animal suffering must be minimised by use of the mildest procedures available. Conditions on project licences require this, so that when a less severe validated alternative to the LD50 test becomes available, it must be used.

Class A Drug Arrests

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests for Class A drug possession took place in Hartlepool last year. [210642]

Caroline Flint: Data for Class A drug possession arrests is currently not collated in the format requested.

Information on the number of known drug offenders found guilty or cautioned for Class A drugs and the number of possession offences in the Cleveland police force area are available in the Area tables, of the "Drug seizure and offender statistics, United Kingdom", United Kingdom, 2001 and 2002, for which figures are currently available. Copies are available in the Library of the House.

Country Information Policy Unit Reports

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the sources of the information in the

Home Office Country Information Policy Unit reports are; what checks are made to verify their accuracy; and how often those reports are updated. [210763]

Mr. Browne: The Home Office Country Information and Policy Unit (CIPU) produces Country Reports on the 20 countries that generate the largest number of asylum applications in the UK. They are issued twice a year, at the end of April and October and are published on the Home Office website. The reports are used by Home Office officials involved in the asylum and human rights determination process.

The reports are compiled from a wide variety of well respected, independent and publicly available sources. These sources include intergovernmental organisations (such as the UN), governmental sources (including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office) and human rights organisations (for example Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch). All information in each report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material. The Country Reports do not contain any Home Office opinion or policy—they are essentially a compilation of material produced by other organisations.

We are firmly committed to ensuring that the country information material produced to inform asylum decisions meets the highest standards. Under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, we have established the independent Advisory Panel on Country Information (APCI) to provide rigorous independent external scrutiny of country information material produced by the Home Office and make recommendations to help ensure that it is of the highest quality. The APCI is proving to be very effective in fulfilling its function.

Departmental Electrical Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205735]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997; [205868]

(2) how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997; [205615]

(3) how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205591]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Documents

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is in relation to the storage of documents and the use of shredders; and whether this policy has been reviewed in the past 12 months. [206743]

Fiona Mactaggart: The department follows standards set by The National Archives (TNA). Both electronic and paper documents are created as part of its business. They are held for as long as required in line with set retention periods. When no longer required by the business they are then appraised for transfer to TNA as a significant historical record or destroyed. The destruction of documents is determined according to whether or not they are confidential. Confidential material will be destroyed using shredders or specialist disposal companies. The department's policies for managing its records, their retention, and disposal has remained constant.

Drug Trafficking

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women were convicted of trafficking (i) class A drugs and (ii) cannabis from Africa to the UK in each of the last five years. [210060]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible from the information held on the Home Office Court Proceedings database to identify men or women convicted of trafficking drugs from Africa to the UK.

Drug-related Crime

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost of crime committed by a heroin addict in the UK was for the latest period for which figures are available. [210146]

Caroline Flint: Estimates of the costs of drug-related crime are not available by individual drug type. However, a recent study published by the Home Office provides estimates of the total economic and social costs of Class A drug use. It estimates that the criminal justice costs associated with problematic drug use range between £2.0 and £3.6 billion in 2000. The majority of these costs are attributable to heroin and crack cocaine users. The cost per user is estimated to be £7,013 per annum. These costs include arrest and police detention costs and those accruing to courts and prisons. The study also estimates the victim costs of drug-related crime, including these in the total increases the range of estimates to £8.8 to £15.8 billion—around £31,200 per user per annum.

External Supplies

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many tenders were let by his Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209097]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office does not hold a central record of the number or value of tenders let by the Department in each financial year, to obtain this information would incur disproportionate costs.

Firearms

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the firearms seized under Operation Stealth were legally registered firearms; how many were found to have been used in crimes; and of these, how many had been used by the registered owner. [206629]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Football Banning Orders

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many football banning orders have been issued in each year since 1997, broken down by area in which the offender resides. [209997]

Caroline Flint: Football Banning Orders in their current form were introduced by the Football (Disorder) Act 2000. Detailed information on earlier versions is not available. However, Table 1 provides the total number of Football Banning Orders imposed each year since enactment of the 2000 Act. As at 20 January 2005 there are 2,771 Football Banning Orders in place. Table 2 provides details of the police authority area in which the subjects reside.

Table 1

	Number of football banning orders imposed
2000	182
2001	582
2002	709
2003	808
2004	1,238
2005	32

Table 2

Police authority area	*Individuals currently subject to a football banning order*
Avon and Somerset constabulary	22
Bedfordshire police	12
Cambridgeshire constabulary	40
Cheshire constabulary	39
Cleveland constabulary	64
Cumbria constabulary	33
Derbyshire constabulary	88
Devon and Cornwall constabulary	39
Dorset police	5
Durham constabulary	11
Dyfed-Powys police	0
Essex police	36
Gloucestershire constabulary	0
Greater Manchester police	272
Gwent constabulary	1
Hampshire constabulary	136
Hertfordshire constabulary	39
Humberside police	71
Kent constabulary	3
Lancashire constabulary	91
Leicestershire constabulary	45
Lincolnshire constabulary	30
Merseyside police	58
Metropolitan police	304
Norfolk constabulary	25
North Wales police	69
North Yorkshire police	22
Northamptonshire constabulary	8
Northumbria police	92
Nottinghamshire constabulary	55
South Wales police	265
South Yorkshire police	161
Staffordshire police	158
Suffolk constabulary	12
Surrey police	0
Sussex police	9
Thames Valley police	28
Warwickshire constabulary	0
West Mercia constabulary	26
West Midlands police	251
West Yorkshire police	131
Wiltshire constabulary	20

Identity Cards

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the proposed identity card will contain an individual's address on the face of the card; what controls will apply to the release of an individual's address to individuals or organisations contacting the databank; and if he will make a statement. [208731]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Bill sets out the information that may be held on the National Identity Register and includes address. The Bill does not specify what information will be recorded on the card face or the card chip and this will be set out in regulations, approved by Parliament. There have been no final decisions on whether address would be displayed on the card.

The Bill sets out to whom information could be provided with, and without consent. Address information could be provided (i) with consent of the individual under Clause 14, (ii) as part of a required identity check for public services under Clauses 15–17 if Parliament agreed the necessary order or (iii) without consent under Clauses 19–22 if it is to one of the organisations specified under those clauses, for the purposes specified either in those clauses or in regulations made under those clauses.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures he proposes to introduce to enable individuals to challenge information about them held on the proposed identity card. [209900]

Mr. Browne: All individuals recorded on the National Identity Register will have data subject access rights under the Data Protection Act.

The Government are also looking at ways of ensuring that an individual will be able to read his card, and Register-entry, easily.

Where an individual notifies us of an error, we will have processes to ensure that we are satisfied that the information provided is correct. This would include ensuring that this information was indeed provided by the correct individual and, where relevant, that the information is confirmed by the party responsible for maintaining that information. We would confirm with the individual that the updated information has been recorded.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures he proposes to introduce to delete erroneous information held on the proposed identity card. [209901]

Mr. Browne: Generally speaking, a modification of details recorded on the National Identity Register would take place because an individual has told us of a change of details. In this case, we will have processes to ensure that we are satisfied that the information provided is correct, which would include ensuring that this information was indeed provided by the correct individual. We would confirm with the individual that the updated information has been recorded. A record of the previous details would be held.

The other situation by which we could receive information that might lead to a modification is if information is provided to us for the purpose of validating information recorded in the Register. As information is likely to be provided to us for validation purposes, prior to attendance at an enrolment centre, we would be able to inquire as to any inconsistencies at the enrolment session.

All applicants will have data subject access rights under the Data Protection Act and we are looking at ways of ensuring that an individual will be able to read his card, and Register-entry, easily.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the number of machines to read the proposed identity cards which will be required by *(a)* police authorities, *(b)* health authorities, *(c)* social services departments, *(d)* benefit agencies and *(e)* local education authorities. [209902]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Programme is working with a wide range of organisations to develop an understanding of the benefits that the scheme will deliver. As part of these discussions the programme is continuing to develop estimates of the number of card readers required.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether individuals will have access to all information about them held on the proposed identity card. [209905]

Mr. Browne: The Data Protection Act will apply to the identity card scheme, including the National Identity Register and existing subject access rights under that Act will apply. The Data Protection Act does include exemptions that ensure that information that might not be in the public interest to disclose, would not have to be provided. We are also looking at ways of ensuring that an individual will be able to read his card, and Register-entry, easily.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 304W, on identity cards, what tasks are being undertaken by *(a)* the civil servants, *(b)* the secondee from the Metropolitan Police and *(c)* the secondee from the UK Passport Service. [210170]

Mr. Browne: The civil servants conduct a range of tasks to fulfil current programme needs. This includes work to support the passage of legislation, policy development, scheme design, benefits management and business case development. The secondee from the Metropolitan Police Service is leading the benefits management work. The secondee from the UK Passport Service is working on transition planning for the new agency.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 304W, on identity cards, what tasks are being undertaken by *(a)* the secondee from Shreeveport Management Consultancy and *(b)* the consultants from PA Consulting Group Ltd. [210171]

Mr. Browne: The Programme team is made up of civil servants, secondees and consultants working together to support the needs of the programme. This includes work to support; the passage of legislation, policy management, scheme design, benefits management and business case management. PA consulting are working in all of these areas. The secondee from Shreeveport Management Consultancy is working on transition planning for the new agency.

Denzil Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which EU member states require their citizens to possess identity cards. [210293]

Mr. Browne: *[holding answer 24 January 2004]:* Of the 25 EU member states, 21 have identity cards; 12 have a compulsory system and nine have a voluntary system. The 12 countries which have a compulsory system are: Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures will be introduced to enable individuals to ascertain which Government Departments and agencies have asked to see information held on them on the proposed identity card. [210497]

Mr. Browne: The Data Protection Act contains general rules on notification rights and these have been carefully considered and drafted to ensure compliance with the underlying EU directive. These rules will apply to the ID cards scheme.

Any person who is concerned that information has been provided without their knowledge or consent would have data subject access rights under the Data Protection Act. Therefore it would be possible to view information relating to circumstances where information has been provided where there is no reason for the information to be exempted under the Data Protection Act. An example of an exemption would be where information had been provided to the police in connection with a criminal investigation.

Biometric Passports

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the results of the UK Passport Service biometrics pilot will be made public. [210156]

Mr. Browne: The UKPS Biometrics Enrolment Trial final report will be delivered in February 2005. Quality Assurance of the report will follow and the outcome of the trial released during March 2005.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of *(a)* police officers and *(b)* police staff have submitted DNA samples to the police DNA elimination database. [210164]

Caroline Flint: The provision of a DNA sample by police personnel for inclusion on the Police Elimination Database (FED) is voluntary for those who were in employment by the police when the Database was set up in 2000. It is a condition of service for personnel who have joined the police since 1 August 2002.

Approximately 39 per cent. of all police officers and police staff have submitted a DNA sample for inclusion on the Police Elimination Database. A breakdown is not available of the numbers submitted by police officers and police staff.

As at 21 January 2005, there were 78,639 DNA profiles taken from serving officers and police staff in England and Wales retained on the PED. Of these, 62,518 profiles were from police officers and 4,325 from police staff. This represents 44 per cent. of police officers and 5.8 per cent. of police staff.

It was estimated in 2000 at the inception of the PED that approximately 75,000 officers and other police service staff needed to be on the Database because of their role at crime scenes. The vast majority of police officers and police staff who attend crime scenes or handle forensic material now have a DNA profile retained on the Police Elimination Database.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the length of time it will take to check biometric passports at airports, compared with non-biometric passports; and if he will make a statement. [210166]

Mr. Browne: The new biometric passports (ePassports) will have a chip that is to be read by readers located at airports. While all ePassports should conform to a number of international standards, there remains room for interpretation, and thus there will be differences in the way the passports are presented to, and read by, the readers. The time taken to read an ePassport will therefore depend upon the nationality of the ePassport presented and the make/model of the scanner to which it is presented. Trials to assess the interoperability of nations' ePassports and candidate readers are being conducted by some 20 nations. UKPS is fully involved in these. In addition we will be conducting our own tests in UK on a variety of ePassport/reader combinations.

Until satisfactory interoperability can be demonstrated between UK preferred readers and a range of ePassports from other nations, the time to check biometric passports at UK airports cannot be accurately determined. However, current test results indicate that the average reading time is likely to fall in the range 7–10 seconds. It is difficult to make direct and meaningful comparison with non-biometric passport checks since this depends on the actual processes involved.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether individuals applying for a biometric passport will be required to submit *(a)* a standard passport photograph and *(b)* a higher-resolution photograph taken by other means; and if he will make a statement. [210167]

Mr. Browne: Applicants for passport renewal or the issue of a first passport will be required to submit a photograph that meets the recently issued ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) standards.

Guidance has been issued and is readily available to the public by means of a detailed leaflet included with passport application forms. It advises on acceptable poses, headwear and facial expression in particular. We have been working with industry over the past year to ensure that photobooths and other photographic equipments are able to produce photographs that meet the new technical standards. It is therefore the expectation that an applicant will be easily able to obtain a photograph from a source that declares itself in conformance with UKPS standards as they have done hitherto.

UKPS is also modifying its own passport processing systems to scan these photographs to the higher resolution needed to meet the biometric passport standard.

Knives

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will discuss with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry proposals for introduction of a code of practice for retailers selling knives that would distinguish between advertising the sale of blades for domestic purposes and promoting the sale of combat knives. [209520]

Caroline Flint: Advertisements for the sale of weapons and knives in the printed media are subject to a self-regulatory system of controls administered by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) through its Code of Practice. The Code provides that advertisements should contain nothing that condones or is likely to provoke violence or anti-social behaviour. In addition, it is an offence to market a knife in a way which indicates that it is suitable for combat, or is otherwise likely to stimulate violent behaviour.

We are committed to tackling knife crime and we will discuss proposals to do this with all relevant Government Departments.

Managed Migration Directorate

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria caseworkers at the Managed Migration Directorate were instructed to consider when determining applications for the right of establishment in business under EU association agreements from *(a)* 1 June 2003 until August 2003, *(b)* August 2003 to February 2004 and *(c)* February 2004 until 30 April 2004. [207535]

Mr. Browne: The information is as follows.

(a) Applicants for the right of establishment in business under EC Association Agreements(ECAA) in the period 1 June 2003 until August 2003 were required to satisfy the following basic criteria:

that they held a national passport of one of the countries covered by the EC Association Agreements

that if they were switching from another immigration category they had valid leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom or applied no longer than 10 days after the expiry of that leave

that they could provide evidence of a certain level of funds

that they produced a credible business plan

that they provided a declaration indicating that they were going to be self-employed and would not resort to claiming public funds.

(b) In the period August 2003 until February 2004 caseworkers were subsequently instructed that applicants from the relevant qualifying countries who produced a passport with valid leave to enter or remain in the United Kingdom and a business plan would be granted 12 months leave. This was subject to there being no other concerns about the application.

(c) In the period 10 February 2004 until 8 March 2004 caseworkers were instructed as far as switching cases were concerned, with the exception of illegal entrants and those who had overstayed their leave by more than 10 days, to grant applicants 12 months leave to remain. Those seeking further leave to remain provided they had not overstayed their original period of leave by six months were granted a further three years leave to remain.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prosecutions for *(a)* driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle with excess alcohol and *(b)* being in charge of a motor vehicle with excess alcohol (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [209803]

(2) how many prosecutions for *(a)* driving or attempting to drive a mechanically propelled vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs and *(b)* being in charge of a mechanically propelled vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [209804]

(3) how many prosecutions for motor manslaughter offences *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [209805]

(4) how many prosecutions for *(a)* dangerous driving and *(b)* careless or inconsiderate driving (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [209807]

(5) how many prosecutions for driving with uncorrected sight *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [209809]

(6) how many prosecutions for *(a)* causing death by dangerous driving and *(b)* causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [209839]

Caroline Flint: Available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database for Essex police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area, 1997 to 2002 (latest available) are given in the Tables.

Offences of "manslaughter by driving" cannot be identified separately from total manslaughter offences. And offences of "driving with uncorrected sight" cannot be separately identified from other summary driving licence offences.

2003 data will be available in March 2005.

Table C: Findings of guilt at all courts for specific motoring offences[1] within south east Essex PSA[2,3], 1997 to 2002

Number of offences

Offence type	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Causing death by dangerous driving [RTA88 S1 as amended]	—	—	—	—	—	—
Causing death by careless driving under influence of drink or drugs [RTA88 S3A as added]	—	—	—	—	—	—
Dangerous driving [RTA88 S2 as amended]	23	24	23	11	16	17
Unfit to drive through drink or drugs(impairment) [RTA88 S4(1)]	8	4	10	5	5	21
In charge of motor vehicle while unfit through drink or drugs (Impairment) [RTA88 34(2)]	1	—	5	2	2	—
Driving without due care and attention [RTA88 S3]	366	401	380	342	381	231

[1] Covers offences under legislation pertaining to the involvement of a motor vehicle (i.e. mechanically propelled vehicle intended or adapted for use on roads, and includes motor cycles, motor scooters, mechanically propelled invalid carriages, road rollers and tractors).

[2] Covers Southend and includes parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

[3] Includes findings of guilt for south east Essex PSA and findings of guilt at Southend Crown court.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208931]

Fiona Mactaggart: An internal survey undertaken in July 2003 showed that there were 27,146 spaces on the Home Office estate. Of these over 21,158 were at Prison Service establishments, which employ 48,133 staff.

There were 326 spaces, which were specifically reserved for visitors and a further 169 reserved disabled spaces. However, many sites do not specifically reserve spaces for visitors, so the figure is not a true reflection of the number of visitors who use our car parks.

As at 1 January 2005 there were 107 car parking spaces available in the Central London Headquarters estate. Of these six are reserved for Orange Badge holders. There are no spaces specifically reserved for visitors. The new Home Office headquarters building at 2 Marsham Street, which the Department is due to take over responsibility for on 26 January 2005 will have 87 spaces, of which 12 are reserved for visitors, and 17 for Orange Badge holders. The numbers of spaces on the current Headquarters estate will reduce as we vacate the buildings, with 90 due to go when we vacate Queen Anne's Gate in April 2005.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many written questions for his Department were unanswered when Parliament Prorogued; and how many of the unanswered questions were tabled in each of the previous months of the 2003–04 Session. [201553]

Fiona Mactaggart: The total number of written questions for which a substantive answer was not provided before the end of Session was 245. The Department did provide substantive answers to 496 Parliamentary Questions in the four days up to Prorogation. The number of unanswered questions tabled by each month of the previous Session are provided in the table:

Month	*Number of questions unanswered*
2003	
November	0
December	0
2004	
January	1
February	4
March	1
April	1
May	0
June	0
July	7
August	0
September	4
October	45
November	180
Total	245

Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Police

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which basic command units have been required to improve performance by more than the average following the publication of the National Policing Plan. [209169]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The National Policing Plan does not proscribe specific targets for any Basic Command Units (BCUs). Individual performance targets are a matter for the Chief Constable and Police Authority of a given force to agree. In agreeing Force or BCD targets regard must be had to the policing priorities as laid out in the National Policing Plan, however these do not set specific targets.

Police Forces are expected to contribute to local targets which are not specifically police owned. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships of which both police forces and local police authorities are members, will agree crime reduction targets to which BCUs will contribute, however these are not centrally proscribed targets, neither are they the sole responsibility of the police.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will issue guidelines to the police in respect of restraint in a prone position for a long period or on a number of separate occasions but during the same detention; and if he will make a statement. [208737]

Caroline Flint: Guidelines on the issue of restraint techniques by police officers are a matter for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). They tell me that restraint is covered in the ACPO Personal Safety Manual.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) recently carried out a Restraint and Mental Health Review, which proposes measures to reduce the risks associated with restraint. The findings of this review are now being implemented in the Metropolitan Police and shared with ACPO

Police-Immigration Service (Joint Operations)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been arrested as a result of joint operations in London between the police and the Immigration Service. [209620]

Mr. Browne: Since April 2004 there have been approximately 786 joint operations with the police in London resulting in around 1,509 offenders being arrested.

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208624]

Fiona Mactaggart: Secondments are part of the Interchange initiative, which promotes the exchange of people and good practice between the Civil Service and other organisations: public, private and voluntary. Interchange provides opportunities for civil servants to learn new skills, widen their experience and develop ideas. It also brings in skills and experiences from other sectors.

Four people are currently on inward secondment to the Home Office from the private sector. Their details are set out in the table:

Name	*Seconded from*	*Receiving Home Office Unit*	*Responsibilities*
Georgina Banton	Ernst & Young	Private Office	Private Secretary
Brenten Caffin	PA Consultancy Services Ltd.	Strategic Policy Team	Project work supporting crime reduction incentive

Name	*Seconded from*	*Receiving Home Office Unit*	*Responsibilities*
Joanna Place	Royal Bank of Scotland	Immigration and Nationality Department	Senior Director, Change Management and Reform
Joanna Vickers	Shreeveport	ID Cards Delivery Unit	Leading solutions design workstream for identity cards procurement

Street Crime

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 648W, on street crime, how many individuals have been *(a)* questioned and *(b)* arrested by immigration officers under joint multi-agency operations involving the Immigration Service and the police in London, broken down by ethnic group. [206823]

Mr. Browne: While officers routinely record the details of persons questioned in their individual notebooks, records of *(a)* the number of people questioned or *(b)* the number of people arrested as part of joint, police-led crime reduction operations are not kept centrally. However, locally collated provisional information indicates that between May 2003 to December 2004 the UK Immigration Service participated in approximately 424 such operations which resulted in the arrest of around 1,357 immigration offenders, including 898 failed asylum seekers.

The Immigration Service is currently exploring better ways of collecting and collating information on people questioned and arrested on joint multi-agency operations.

Yarl's Wood

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many detainees were present in Yarl's Wood on the night of 14 February 2002; how many escaped from the detention centre during the incident which was the subject of the Prison Service Ombudsman's report published on 16 November; and if he will make a statement. [206167]

Mr. Browne: A total of 385 detainees were present in Yarl's Wood on the night of 14 February 2002.

There were 23 escapes.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what part Ministers played in the preparation of the contract between the Home Office/Immigration and Nationality Directorate and Group 4 Amey International (GAIL) for the design and build of the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre; and if he will make a statement. [206169]

Mr. Browne: Ministers are not involved in the preparation of contracts either by way of choice of contractor or in the detail contained within the contract document. Ministers and other public officials may however be involved in specification and/or consultation prior to contract tender. The Treasury Solicitors and Freshfields prepared the Yarl's Wood contract.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice Ministers *(a)* sought and *(b)* received in relation to the timescale for the project to design and build the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre. [206170]

Mr. Browne: Due to the large volume of records on this project, the answer could be obtained only at disproportionate cost however, I can say that Ministers were kept fully informed during each stage of the process including procurement of the site, construction and finally the opening and operation of the centre. These briefings covered the key milestones at each stage of the project and updates on progress.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps Ministers took to satisfy themselves that the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre opened in November 2001 was fit for purpose. [206171]

Mr. Browne: Yarl's Wood was designed to, and when completed, met all the required British standards and Building Control requirements. As Contract Administrators, PMI (later Osprey PMI) checked both the design and construction to ensure that the project was in full compliance with the requirements.

If PMI were not satisfied with a particular element of the build, a contractual notice of non-compliance was issued to the main contractor and the existence of such a notice, if not corrected, would have prevented the centre being opened.

A limited number of non-compliance notices were issued but were all checked and cleared prior to a Permit to Use (PtU) being issued to GSL. All the operating procedures and contingency plans were written and approved by the Immigration Nationality Directorate prior to a PtU being issued. Ministers were informed when the centre was finally ready for use.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what performance measures relating to assaults by detainees were contained in the contract for the operation of the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre by Group 4; and if he will make a statement. [206172]

Mr. Browne: There is no mechanism for applying Performance Measures for individual assaults by detainees in the contract for the operation of the Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre (IRC).

Performance Measures are applied for incidents of concerted in-discipline whereby for any incident where three or more detainees (and/or dependent children) act together with the intention of disrupting the order and discipline of the Removal Centre, Performance Measures shall accrue. Performance points accrue for each incident. There is no restriction on the number of times this Performance Measure can be applied.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation took place between the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and Group 4 Amey International Limited on the operational implications for the Yarl's Wood Detention

Centre of his decision of October 2001 that the use of prison places for immigration detainees would cease by January 2002. [206173]

Mr. Browne: There were regular meetings between the Immigration Nationality Directorate officials and Group 4 Amey International Limited (GAIL) to discuss operational issues prior to the opening of Yarl's Wood Removal Centre.

The contract with GAIL required them to accept into Yarl's Wood whoever the Immigration Service sent to them and the Centre had facilities, including more secure areas, to assist with the management of difficult detainees.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice was given by Osprey PMI to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate *(a)* in April 2000 and *(b)* subsequently about the project timescale for the building of the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre; if he will publish this advice; and if he will make a statement. [206175]

Mr. Browne: The brief given to PMI (later Osprey PMI) in April 2000, on their appointment as Consultants, was that there was a requirement to provide 1,800 additional detention places by the end of the financial year 2000–01. PMI initially advised the Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) that the timescale was not feasible but, after discussion, it was agreed that tenders would be issued to provide the first centre at Yarl's Wood. If the marketplace in general came back with the answer that the timescale for the programme was impossible re-assessment would have to be made. In the process, tenders returned documents offering to complete the project within the required timescale by adopting a modular building solution. Following contract award, IND's contract administrator, PMI carried out continual reviews of programme and progress on Yarl's Wood and advised IND on at least a weekly basis.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the speed of the process leading up to the awarding of the contract to design, build and run the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre, further to the comments made in the report by the Prisons Ombudsman into the disturbance and fire at the centre in February 2002. [206176]

Mr. Browne: The overall timetable was always considered to be exacting, however it could only be tested by going to the marketplace. The contract tender and award process followed European public purchasing rules. All major projects are now subject to a more robust challenge and scrutiny system under the Office for Government Commerce Gateway review process and internally within the Immigration and Nationality Department by the Joint Approvals Committee (made up of senior officials) and also by the Home Office Group Investment Board.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Equipment/Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many items of electrical equipment were used by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205733]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office does not retain the information requested centrally, and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

All expenditure by the Scotland Office in the purchase and procurement of services, and items, is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting. Where possible, purchases of electrical equipment is through negotiated contracts.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205579]

Mrs. McGuire: In the current year, there have been no reports to date of any equipment, or other property, being unaccounted for.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206365]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since that date the following items of property have been reported lost or stolen:

	Item	*Lost*	*Stolen*
1999–2000	Laptop	—	1
2000–01	0	—	—
2001–02	0	—	—
2002–03	Mobile phone	1	—
2003–04	0	—	—

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205870]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Information on the cost of lighting is not held separately.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206678]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Since that date expenditure in the categories requested was as follows:

£

	1999–2000[1]	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Electricity[2]	11,855	22,807	19,526	28,439	23,703
Water[2]	1,067	3,656	4,221	7,018	11,699
Gas[2]	43,024	78,224	94,866	88,244	88,085
Telephones	13,404	89,217	87,859	83,163	88,298
Mobile phones	6,760	14,275	11,850	7,216	6,646
Televisions	0	480	1,439	1,439	1,439

[1] Part year

[2] The information relates to buildings where the Scotland Office are major occupiers. Costs relating to buildings shared with the Scottish Executive are not separately identifiable.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204353]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

The information is not held in the form requested, however since that date the Scotland Office and the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland have spent the following on hospitality and entertainment:

	£
1999–2000	[1]10,638
2000–01	41,275
2001–02	25,789
2002–03	41,782
2003–04	25,969

[1] Part year

All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special adviser's travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207177]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 18 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 966W.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209578]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office has not incurred any expenditure on advertising staff vacancies in 2002 or 2003.

Parliamentary Constituencies Order

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he expects draft Statutory Instrument SSI0710, laid on 14 December, to come into force. [207531]

Mr. Darling *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* The Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order will come into force the day after it is approved by Her Majesty in Council. As I said during Questions on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 478, I hope the Order will be in force in February.

CABINET OFFICE

Cancelled Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the Ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since his appointment. [209216]

Mr. Milburn: There is no record kept of cancelled engagements in the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster's diary. When engagements have had to be cancelled, wherever possible we try to re-instate them at a later date. All engagements are subject to ministerial and parliamentary business.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years [207822]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W, by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Christopher Leslie).

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A3 Hindhead

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will place all papers relating to the advice given to Ministers in 2004 concerning the A3 at Hindhead in the Library. [209514]

Mr. Jamieson: I have been asked to reply.

We have no plans to do so at present.

Civil Servants

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many civil servants in her Department work in the *(a)* Commercial Best Practice and Enterprise, *(b)* Maximising Potential in the Workplace, *(c)* Finance for Investment, *(d)* Strengthening Regional Economies and *(e)* Knowledge Transfer and Innovation unit, broken down by salary band. [210471]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 25 January 2005]*: The approximate numbers of full-time equivalent staff expected to work in DTI HQ on the equivalent objectives at 31 March 2005 are as follows:

	Number
(a) Effective Channels with Business (which incorporates Commercial Best Practice)	501
(b) Maximising Potential in the Workplace	214
(c) Enterprise, Growth and Business Investment (formerly Enterprise for All and Finance for Investment)	340
(d) Regions	84
(e) Knowledge Transfer and Innovation	247

We do not have readily available this information broken down by salary band.

ECGD

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 27 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1242W, on the Export Credits Guarantee Department, which non-governmental organisations made informal representations. [210120]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: Further, to my answer of 27 October 2004, representatives of Transparency International (UK) and the Corner House made informal representations in respect of ECGD's anti-bribery and corruption procedures.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 27 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1242W, on the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD), what the value was of guarantees issued to Airbus under ECGD's anti-corruption procedures interim arrangements. [210122]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: The value of the guarantees issued in support of Airbus aircraft under ECGD's anti-bribery and corruption procedures interim arrangements was US$202.8 million.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what amount she has budgeted to cover liability for costs *(a)* of her Department and *(b)* of those for whom her Department has agreed to pay all or part of their costs in relation to the action for judicial review brought against her Department by Corner House in respect of Export Credits Guarantee Department forms. [210619]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: The current estimate for what ECGD will pay its external solicitors and Counsel in relation to the action for judicial review brought by Corner House is £64,710. The costs of the Corner House, which ECGD will pay under the terms of the High Court settlement of 13 January 2004.

EU Presidency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's priorities for the Competitiveness Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [209553]

Mr. Alexander: The overall Council Agenda for 2005 is set out clearly in the UK-Luxembourg Annual Operating Programme (AOP), copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The agenda for the UK Presidency will be determined, to a large extent, by the agenda we inherit from Luxembourg and progress on the dossiers identified in the AOP.

My Department is in the process of planning and identifying detailed policy themes for the UK Presidency, within the context of the broader EU agenda. We expect work in the Competitiveness Council to take forward the conclusions from the Mid-Term Review of the Lisbon Agenda, concentrating in particular on promoting employment, better regulation, open and sustainable markets in an outward-facing Europe and boosting our economies' potential for innovation and research. Key items in the Competitiveness Council during our Presidency are likely to include the Services Directive, Seventh Framework Programme for research and technological development, the REACH chemicals regulation and better regulation work, in line with the recent 6 Presidency statement.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he intends to answer the letter dated 20 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Brunt. [210834]

Alan Johnson: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 25 January.

Incapacity and DLA Claimants

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what is the age breakdown of *(a)* incapacity and *(b)* disability living allowance claimants is. [208937]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the tables.

All incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Great Britain by age and percentage as at 31 August 2004.

	Number of claimants	*Percentage of claimants*
All ages	2,704,200	100
Under 20	40,500	1.5
20 to 24	127,400	4.7
25 to 29	145,400	5.4
30 to 34	208,900	7.7
35 to 39	265,400	9.8
40 to 44	306,300	11.3

All incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in Great Britain by age and percentage as at 31 August 2004.

	Number of claimants	*Percentage of claimants*
45 to 49	328,900	12.2
50 to 54	393,300	14.5
55 to 59	530,200	19.6
60 to 64	328,000	12.1
65 and over	29,900	1.1

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1 percentage points.

2. Figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA), including IB credits only cases.

3. Great Britain figures include a small number of claimants resident overseas.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Disability living allowance recipients in Great Britain by age and percentage as at 31 August 2004

	Number of recipients	*Percentage of recipients*
All ages	2,634,300	100
0 to 4	41,900	1.6
5 to 9	99,200	3.8
10 to 15	135,400	5.1
16 to 19	59,400	2.3
20 to 24	67,100	2.5
25 to 29	72,000	2.7
30 to 34	108,400	4.1
35 to 39	150,700	5.7
40 to 44	179,100	6.8
45 to 49	197,700	7.5
50 to 54	235,800	9.0
55 to 59	319,400	12.1
60 to 64	346,900	13.2
65 to 69	311,800	11.8
70 to 74	203,600	7.7
75 to 79	80,200	3.0
80 and over	25,800	1.0

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 100. Totals may not sum due to rounding. Percentages are rounded to the nearest 0.1 percentage points.

Source:

IAD information Centre, 5 per cent. sample

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent changes have been made to eligibility for winter fuel payments for those living in residential care who *(a)* are receiving and *(b)* are not receiving pension credit; and if he will estimate in each case how many people have been affected by those changes. [211094]

Malcolm Wicks: There have been no recent changes to eligibility for winter fuel payments for those living in residential care. The winter fuel payment regulations were amended in September 2004 to ensure those people who receive pension credit are treated in the same way as those who were previously in receipt of income support.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths (Lancashire)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of how many deaths in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Burnley alcohol was the primary cause in each of the last five years. [210962]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Peter Pike, dated 26 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for how many deaths in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Burnley, alcohol was the primary cause, in each of the past five years. I am replying in his absence. (210962)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. Figures in the attached table show the number of deaths where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1999 to 2003, among residents of the County of Lancashire and the Local Authority of Burnley.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) definition of alcohol-related deaths only includes those causes regarded as being most directly due to alcohol consumption. Apart from deaths due to accidental poisoning with alcohol, this definition excludes external causes of death, such as road traffic deaths and other accidents, and alcohol-related suicides and homicides. Estimates of the annual total number of deaths in which alcohol has played a role can therefore vary widely depending on the criteria used. The definition used by ONS allows for consistent comparisons over time for those deaths where a clear association with alcohol consumption can generally be assumed.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] in the County of Lancashire[2] and Burnley local authority area[3], 1999–2003[4]

	Area	
	County of Lancashire	*Burnley local authority*
1999	167	17
2000	149	6
2001	182	10
2002	165	13
2003	177	19

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed as follows:

291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol

For the years 2001–03 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in: Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Figures provided relate to the current county of Lancashire. This excludes the unitary authorities of Blackburn and Darwen, and Blackpool, created on 1 April 1998, which were part of the former county.

[3] Usual residents of these areas.

[4] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Cancer

John Mann: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the survival rates were for each form of cancer in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [211105]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. John Mann, dated 26 January 2005:

As National Statistician., I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the survival rates were for each form of cancer in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. (211105)

Survival rates are not separately available by individual year of diagnosis. The latest available one and five year survival rates for the 20 most common cancers in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These figures were published on the National Statistics website on 9 March 2004, and are available at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk = 7899

Child Trust Funds

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of children in Burnley are eligible for the Child Trust Fund. [210968]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the number of children in Hendon who qualify for payments under the Child Trust Fund *(a)* at £250 and *(b)* at £500; and if he will make a statement. [210877]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211326]

Mr. Timms: Since our election in 1997, the Government have put in place a radical programme of both macro-economic and micro-economic reform to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 55 per cent., long-term unemployment has fallen by 87 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has been eliminated, having fallen from 125 in May 1997 to 0 in December 2004.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

ECOFIN

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the outcome was of the ECOFIN Council held on 18 January; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [210621]

Mr. Moore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with his European Union counterparts on reforming the Growth and Stability Pact; and if he will make a statement. [210793]

Mr. Gordon Brown: I attended ECOFIN in Brussels on 18 January 2005.

The Presidency briefly introduced its work programme, emphasising its three priorities: Lisbon Mid-Term Review, Reform of the Stability and Growth Pact and negotiation of the Financial Perspectives 2007–13. The Commission welcomed the work programme.

Further to discussions between Foreign Ministers at the extraordinary meeting of the General Affairs Council on 7 January, ECOFIN discussed the economic consequences of the South-Asian Tsunami. The Commission noted that the macroeconomic consequences of the Tsunami are likely to be contained, although with significant differences across affected countries. Worst hit in macroeconomic terms are likely to be the Maldives and Sri Lanka. EU financial support could be up to 1.5 billion euros, which will include 100 million euros in humanitarian aid, 350 million euros in reconstruction aid and a proposed EIB loan facility of up to 1 billion euros guaranteed by the EC budget. The size and structure of the facility have yet to be decided and will be dependent on the outcome of the needs assessment being carried out by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. The UK emphasised the challenge of long-term reconstruction, and stressed the importance of completing the needs assessment before deciding the terms of the EIB package. The Presidency said they would return to this at the February ECOFIN.

ECOFIN noted Presidency conclusions for France and Germany. The Council reviewed measures taken by Greece to correct its excessive deficit. Greece pointed to continued reforms on both the expenditure and revenues sides of the budget. The Commission noted that despite this corrective action by the Greek government, this was still insufficient for Greece to correct its excessive deficit in 2005. The Council conclusions were approved without discussion, and the 104(8) decision, that Greece has not taken effective action to correct its excessive deficit in line with its convergence programme, was adopted.

The Commission noted that Hungary has exceeded its deficit target for 2004 by 1 percentage point, and that the same outcome was likely for 2005. It recommended that Hungary, in line with article 104(8), had not taken effective action to correct its excessive deficit in line with its convergence programme. Council conclusions and an article 104(8) decision with respect to Hungary were adopted without further discussion.

As regards the excessive deficit procedures against the new member states, the Commission confirmed that the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia, Cyprus and Malta were in line with the targets set by their convergences programmes. Council opinions on the stability programmes of Austria, Luxembourg, Sweden and Netherlands and on the convergence programme of the Czech Republic were adopted without discussion.

Discussion of Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) reform options took place, on both the preventative and the corrective arm of the SGP. The UK highlighted that proper account needed to be taken of the economic cycle, of debt sustainability and of public investment.

The Council endorsed the Annual Report on Structural reforms 2005, prepared by the Economic Policy Committee (EPC), which focussed on employment and growth as a core priority. The Council agreed to forward it as a contribution by the Council to the Spring 2005 European Council.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207817]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-secretary of State, Department of Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Iraq

Derek Conway: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated total cost to date is of UK operations and assistance in Iraq. [210406]

Mr. Boateng: In Budget 2003 the Chancellor set aside £3 billion as a Special Reserve to cover the cost of military operations in Iraq. £1 billion was drawn down by the Ministry of Defence in the Spring Supplementary Estimate for 2002–03.

In the 2003 pre-Budget report, the Government carried forward the £2 billion unallocated special reserve into 2003–04 and added a further £500 million in 2003–04. £300 million was also added in 2004–05 as a prudent allowance against continuing commitments in Iraq and elsewhere in the war against terrorism. A further £520 million for the Special Reserve in 2004–05 was announced by the Chancellor in the 2004 pre-Budget report.

The Ministry of Defence drew down £1,539 million in the 2003–04 Winter and Spring Supplementary Estimates for the costs of military operations in Iraq.

At the Madrid Donors' Conference in October 2003, the Government announced a total UK pledge of £544 million towards the reconstruction effort in Iraq up to March 2006. Of this, the Department for International Development has committed over £331 million for humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq since the conflict.

National Minimum Wage (Lancashire)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people he estimates in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Lancashire are benefiting from the national minimum wage; what percentage that is of those in work in each case; and if he will make a statement. [210969]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Peter Pike, dated 26 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people it is estimated are benefiting from the national minimum wage in Burnley and Lancashire. I am replying in his absence. (210969)

Estimates for the number of jobs paid below the minimum wage for local authority areas and counties are not available. However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) calculates this information for the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions. A guide to measuring low pay and associated articles and data can be found on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 5837&Pos = 1&ColRank = 1&Rank = 272

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207660]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury had no pay television subscriptions prior to financial year 2002–03. The number of subscriptions and the costs including VAT for each complete financial year since then are as follows. The costs include £44,000 and £39,000 in 2002–03 and 2003–04 respectively payable to the Central Office of Information for Houses of Parliament television channels.

Productivity

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what GDP per hour worked in the UK has been on a constant price basis in each year since 1979. [210606]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. David Willetts, dated 26 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the levels of constant price GDP per hour worked in the UK in each year since 1979. I am replying in his absence. (210606)

The National Statistics measure of output per hour uses Gross Value Added rather than Gross Domestic Product as the numerator. The table below shows the index of whole economy GVA per hour from 1993, which is when the hours series is available from.

Index of whole economy GVA per hour, 1993–2003

	Whole economy GVA per hour[1]
1993	84.5
1994	87.0
1995	88.3
1996	90.0
1997	91.3
1998	93.8
1999	95.4
2000	98.9
2001	100.0
2002	101.7
2003	103.5

[1] 2001 = 100

Tax Credits

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of tax credit awards have been appealed since their introduction. [210433]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of written appeals received against tax credit decisions by 31 December 2004 is equivalent to roughly 1 per cent. of all tax credit applications put into award since the introduction of working tax credit and child tax credit.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what monitoring of advice given by operators in tax credit call centres his Department has conducted. [210435]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue monitor the quality of advice their Helpline advisers provide in a number of ways. First, every team leader listens to a number of calls each month for every adviser in their team and then gives individual feedback on the quality of their service. Second, there is a Quality Team who listen to 50 random calls each month from each of the six call centres—they too provide feedback to the advisers from their findings. And finally, there is an independent validation that the checks have been completed each month—this team listens to calls that have been picked for checking and they too provide input and advice on the quality of service.

Chris Ruane: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost was of the introduction of the IT system for tax credits; what assessment he has made of the system; and what penalty clauses there were in the contract for the provision of IT services to enable the Government to recover the costs of failure and breakdown. [210437]

Dawn Primarolo: Details are in the Inland Revenue's Annual Report and Accounts for 2003–04 published on 21 October 2004 at page 104.

The Inland Revenue and EDS are currently in discussions over payment of compensation for the errors with the NTC system. These discussions are on-going and so I am unable to say anything further at this stage.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his forecast is of the expenditure on the child care element of the working tax credit in 2005–06. [210749]

Dawn Primarolo: For a forecast of total tax credit expenditure in 2005–06, I refer the hon. Member to Table B13 and B16 in pre Budget report, December 2004. No separate forecast has been made for expenditure on the child care element of working tax credit in 2005–06.

Tom Levitt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of applications for tax credits have been significantly wrongly assessed initially. [210796]

Dawn Primarolo: For the level of accuracy of processing and calculating tax credits for 2003–04 I refer my hon. Friend to page 29 of the Inland Revenue's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2004. This is available on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. The Inland Revenue will similarly report against its targets for 2004–05 in due course.

Mr. Soley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether parents can claim tax credit against the cost of employing a registered nanny; and if he will make a statement. [210816]

Dawn Primarolo: From April 2005, parents in England who use nannies who are approved under the Department for Education and Skills Child Care Approval scheme will be to claim the child care element.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many families in Hendon *(a)* received child tax credit and *(b)* were estimated to be entitled to it on the latest date for which figures are available; what the average monthly payment was in the last month for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement; [210874]

(2) how many families in Hendon *(a)* received working tax credit and *(b)* were estimated to be entitled to it on the latest date for which figures are available; what the average monthly payment was in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [210875]

Dawn Primarolo: For *(a)*, estimates of the number of in-work families in each constituency receiving tax credits are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics, Geographical Analyses. December 2004". This can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

For *(b)*, estimates of the number of families eligible for these tax credits are not available at the constituency level.

Information on average monthly payments of child tax credit and working tax credit is not available, as explained in the technical note in "Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics. December 2004". This can be found on the Inland Revenue website.

Tom Levitt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are in receipt of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit in the High Peak constituency. [210795]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits in each constituency (broken down by families with and without children) appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* families and *(b)* individuals in Nottingham North constituency benefit from the working tax credit. [211012]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits in each constituency (broken down by families with and without children) appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average tax burden on a single earner family on average earnings with two children claiming the working tax credit in the Nottingham North constituency was in the latest period for which figures are available; and what the tax burden was on such a family in *(a)* 1975–76 and *(b)* 1997–98. [211014]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available at the constituency level. For the tax burden for a single earner couple on UK average earnings I refer the right hon. Friend to table 14.10 in the "Tax Benefit Reference Manual 2004–05 Edition" available in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the total expenditure on *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit in Stoke-on-Trent has been in each year since those schemes have been in operation; [210868]

(2) how many people in Stoke-on-Trent have successfully claimed *(a)* working tax credit and *(b)* child tax credit in each year since those schemes have been in operation. [210869]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families in each local authority and constituency receiving these tax credits appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses." These can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

The national level of expenditure on tax credits in the year ending 31 March 2004 appears in the Inland Revenue report and accounts for that year. The amounts paid to families in each local authority or constituency are not available.

Teenage Pregnancies

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many teenage pregnancies there were in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* the London borough of Havering, *(c)* Greater London, *(d)* Essex and *(e)* England in (i) over 16s and (ii) under 16s in the most recent period for which figures are available. [210529]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Andrew Rosindell, dated 26 January 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question (PQ) asking for information on teenage pregnancies in Romford, the London borough of Havering, Greater London, Essex and England. I am replying in his absence. (210529)

The most recent year for which conception statistics are available is 2002. Figures for this year are provisional.

Conception figures are not routinely produced by Parliamentary Constituency. However, figures for teenage conceptions by Parliamentary Constituency in 2000 were given in an answer to a previous PQ and placed in the House of Commons Library (PQ 87154, Hansard No. 21, column 586W). There were 49 teenage conceptions in Romford in 2000.

Conception figures by age or for subsequent years are not available by Parliamentary Constituency.

The data requested for the London borough of Havering, Greater London, Essex and England are given in the attached table.

Number of teenage conceptions to women aged under 16 and 16–17, 2002

	Age	
	Under 16	*16–17*
London borough of Havering	18	132
Greater London	1,229	5,283
Essex	154	635
England	7,395	31,955

HEALTH

Adverse Drug Reactions

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action the Committee on Safety of Medicines takes when it receives reports of adverse drug reactions to insulin glargine; [210114]

(2) how many cases of suspected adverse drug reactions for human insulin there were in 2003; what the symptoms of such adverse reactions were; and what research he has *(a)* evaluated and *(b)* commissioned on the effects of the use of GM produced insulin analogues. [210116]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* As with all medicines, the safety of human insulins is monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), with independent expert advice from the committee on safety of medicines (CSM). All information on the safety of these products is evaluated as it becomes available.

Insulin glargine (Lantus) is a long acting insulin licensed throughout the European Union. As with all new medicines, it is currently under intensive monitoring by the MHRA and the CSM. Prescribers are asked to report through the yellow card scheme all suspected adverse reactions for products under intensive monitoring, which are identified by an inverted black triangle symbol in the British National Formulary. When reports are received they are added to the database of adverse drug reactions. All reports of serious adverse drug reactions are evaluated by a member of the professional staff of the MHRA with particular responsibility for that product. These reports are then discussed in the context of all reports for the product at a weekly meeting of professional medical and scientific staff of the MHRA to identify any new safety issues.

A total of 142 reports of suspected adverse reactions were reporting through the Yellow Card Scheme in association with all human insulins in 2003. The most common adverse drug reactions reported related to decreases or increases in blood sugar, headache, injection site reaction and pruritis (itching).

In 2000, the CSM's sub-committee on Pharmacovigilance (SCOP) considered a systematic review of the literature on the safety of human insulins (Airey et al Diabetic Medicine 2000). A total of 52 randomised controlled trials were identified, in addition to 56 studies of other designs and case reports. The SCOP advised that although some patients have experienced problems on transferring to human insulin and are better suited to animal derived insulins, there is no clear evidence of safety problem specific to human insulin. This advice was communicated to prescribers in an article in the drug safety bulletin, "Current Problems in Pharmacovigilance" in September 2000. In 2002, SCOP considered a review of human insulin versus animal insulin in people with diabetes mellitus published by the Cochrane Library. This review included randomised controlled trials of at least one month in duration until May 2002. No significant differences in metabolic control or hypoglycaemic episodes between various insulin species could be elucidated. The patient information leaflets for insulins provide detailed information about the risk of hypoglycaemia and the advice on action to take should it occur.

Burns Units (West Midlands)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist burns services units there are in the West Midlands region. [210125]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* There are two specialist burns units within the West Midlands region. University Hospital Birmingham National Health Service Foundation Trust has a unit which deals with adult burns and Birmingham Children's Hospital NHS Trust has a unit which deals with paediatric burns.

Individuals from the Warwickshire area also have access to the burns unit at the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Care Homes (Pension Credit)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to award care home residents the amount of pension credit they would receive if they were still living in their own homes; and if he will make a statement. [207734]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 13 January 2005]:* We have no plans to change the residential charging arrangements relating to the savings element of pension credit. Those people in residential care receiving £4.65 or less savings credit have all of their award disregarded when the local authority assesses what they can afford to pay for their care. In addition, care home residents with weekly incomes so great that they do not qualify for savings credit also receive a savings disregard of £4.65. Only where a resident has an award above £4.65 is the amount above £4.65 taken into account in their assessment.

This solution ensures that the receipt of savings credit by care home residents does not create an anomaly in the system of care home charges. If residents in receipt of savings credit retained it all, they would be better off than residents with higher incomes not in receipt of savings credit.

Continuing Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he plans to produce a national framework for assessment for fully-funded NHS continuing care. [210824]

Dr. Ladyman: As was announced on 9 December 2004, I commissioned work to be started on a national framework for continuing care to improve consistency of assessments and approach and ease of understanding of continuing care and the assessment process for patients, their families and practitioners alike. Officials are in the process of working with the national health service, local authorities, voluntary and patient/user groups and the Health Service Ombudsman's office to plan the content and timescale of this piece of work.

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how his Department calculates the NHS reference costs for the *(a)* provision and *(b)* fitting of digital hearing aids. [210238]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department collects unit cost and activity data from all national health service providers in England each financial year.

Various appropriate activity currencies are used for a range of services and treatments provided by the NHS, which form part of the scope of the reference cost collection. Unit cost data is produced in accordance with the rules detailed in the NHS costing manual, to ensure that both cost and activity data are calculated on a consistent and comparable basis.

The data are collated and national average unit cost figures are produced by calculating, for each service/treatment area, the total national cost for the service, and then dividing this by the total reported activity for that service, at national level.

All national average costs are published in the national schedule of reference costs, at service level, in conjunction with national activity levels, and inter-quartile ranges, detailing the ranges between which the middle 50 per cent., of NHS provider costs lie.

Data on the provision and fitting of hearing aids are available for the 2002–03 financial year, when the average unit cost reported by NHS trusts undertaking the service in house was 144 per aid, but no comparable data will be available for the financial year 2003–04, following changes to the accounting treatment of digital hearing aids.

Copies of the national schedule of reference costs and the NHS costing manual are available in the Library.

Domiciliary Oxygen Supplies

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the new domiciliary oxygen contract will make available the supply of liquid oxygen; and when he expects it to be implemented. [210236]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Liquid oxygen will be available as part of the new domiciliary oxygen contract where this is a suitable option that meets the clinical and other needs of the individual patient. This is part of an integrated service that allows patients improved access to a range of service options and to benefit from new and developing technologies. We expect to complete evaluation of tenders in the next few weeks and will announce awards as soon as possible. The national health service will work closely with successful contractors over the coming month to introduce the new service from 1 October 2005.

Drug Misuse

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Home Department with regard to the appropriate balance between drug abuse prevention and drug abuse treatment; and if he will make a statement. [210574]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government drugs strategy covers drug prevention, supply, drug related crime and drug treatment. Both drug prevention and treatment are vital components of the overall strategy.

There are regular discussions between the Home Office and the Department on drug prevention and treatment. These cross-Government meetings discuss the work programmes, which are being implemented in support of the drugs strategy.

Eastbourne District General Hospital

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations at Eastbourne District General Hospital have been cancelled in each of the last six months. [208104]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data about cancelled operations are collected at trust level only. Eastbourne District General Hospital is part of East Sussex Hospitals National Health Service Trust. Cancelled operations figures for East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust are shown in the table.

Cancelled operations for East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

	Period	
	Quarter 1 (April to June 2004–05)	*Quarter 2 (July to September 2004–05)*
Number of elective admissions	7,278	7,357
Number of cancelled operations	125	144
Number re-admitted within 28 days	70	93

GP Surgeries (Lancashire)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner surgeries have been upgraded in Lancashire using the local improvement finance trust programme; and if he will make a statement. [209999]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Currently, no surgeries have been upgraded in Lancashire through the national health service local improvement finance trust programme. However, three new buildings are opening to patients in Wigan between February and June 2005, replacing 11 existing practice premises. A further three new schemes in Darwen, Bacup and Nelson are opening shortly, replacing an additional 16 existing practice premises. Similar developments are under construction in Burnley, St. Helens and Oldham and will be opening to patients in 2005 and 2006.

GPs (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on emergency cover for general practitioners in North Yorkshire. [210129]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Primary care trusts in North Yorkshire have set up a team to finalise future arrangements for the provision of out-of-hours services. In the meantime, the North Yorkshire emergency doctors service is continuing to operate.

Health Care-associated Infection

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated for research into health care-associated infections; and what plans he has for how that funding should be spent. [208079]

Miss Melanie Johnson: During the first half of 2003, the Department commissioned a £2.5 million strategic programme of research aimed at improving scientific understanding of antimicrobial resistance. £590,000 of that total sum is being spent on projects that will provide information relating to preventing methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The publication of the Department's report, "Winning Ways—working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England", in December 2003 was accompanied by the announcement that £3 million would be allocated to fund a new research programme on healthcare associated infections.

We have commissioned the "National observational study of the effectiveness of the Clean Your Hands campaign and a cluster randomised controlled trials of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of feedback in intensive care units and acute general medical wards". A further call for research proposals is about to be issued, following the Department's recent science summit.

Laser Eye [illegible]gery

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what independent audits have taken place on the *(a)* efficacy and *(b)* safety of private provision of laser eye surgery. [209317]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) has reviewed available evidence on Laser in situ keratomileusis for the treatment of refractive errors (short and long-sightedness) and issued guidance to the national health service on 15 December 2004. A copy is available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk/pdf/ip/IPG102publicinfo.pdf. We are not aware of other independent audits.

Methadone and Buprenorphine

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pharmacies supply prescription *(a)* methadone and *(b)* buprenorphine; and how many of these are independent pharmacies. [209105]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on specific pharmacies supplying methadone and buprenorphine is not held centrally, but any community pharmacy providing national health service pharmaceutical services presented with a prescription is expected to provide the medicines ordered with reasonable promptness and in accordance with other legal requirements.

NHS Personnel Costs

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the market force factor is applied to personnel costs for NHS employees beyond agreed weighting factors. [209608]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* The market forces factor (MFF) is a component of the weighted capitation formula used to inform allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs). The purpose of the MFF is to equalise the commissioning power of PCTs by adjusting for unavoidable variations in national health service trust costs directly related to location.

The MFF is made up of the following elements.

	Percentage
Staff MFF	around 70
Land MFF	around 1
Buildings MFF	around 4

Skipton Fund

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* total monetary value and *(b)* average value is of the (i) 2,560 stage one payments and (ii) 112 stage two payments which had been made as at 6 December 2004 to the Skipton Fund under the ex gratia payment scheme for people infected with hepatitis C. [209147]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Under the hepatitis C ex-gratia payment scheme, a standard lump sum stage 1 payment of £20,000 may be available to people who have been infected with hepatitis C from contaminated blood products prior to September 1991. A further £25,000 can be claimed by applicants who have already received stage 1 payments, where the disease has progressed.

The table shows the cost of payments made as at 6 December 2004.

	Number of payments made	*Cost of payments (£)*
Stage 1 applications	2,560	51,200,000
Stage 2 applications	112	2,800,000

Special Hospitals

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* staff there have been in (i) Rampton, (ii) Broadmoor and (iii) Ashworth special hospitals in each of the last 10 years. [210899]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The number of consultants and total numbers of other staff for Ashworth and Broadmoor hospitals from 1996 to 2004 are shown in table 1.

Table 1

	Ashworth hospital		*Broadmoor hospital*	
	Consultants	*Staff*	*Consultants*	*Staff*
1995	15	1,505	31	1,150
1996	18	1,531	32	1,084
1997	17	1,530	38	1,146
1998	14	1,582	41	1,111
1999	14	1,580	36	1,124
2000	12	1,640	37	1,258
2001	11	1,724	40	1,299
2002	19	1,937	41	1,374
2003	18	1,876	43	1,411
2004	19	1,824	31	1,364

Table 2 shows the numbers of consultants and all grades of nursing staff for Rampton hospital from 2001 to 2004.

Table 2

	Rampton hospital	
	Consultants	*Nursing staff*
2001	20	829
2002	20	890
2003	22	966
2004	24	1,058

Teenage Sex

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on teenage sexual activity; and what scientific evidence is used in the development of this policy. [210530]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

The Government's teenage pregnancy and wider sexual health strategies reflect the complex reasons behind England's high rate of teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Key aspects of the Government's response to these issues are:

information campaigns highlighting: the importance of under-16s delaying sexual activity (evidence tells us that delay results in lower rates of regret and improved contraception use); resisting peer pressure to engage in early sexual activity; and—for young people who are sexually active—the importance of using condoms to protect against unplanned pregnancies and STIs. This final message is reinforced through the Department of Health's sexual health campaign which, as highlighted in the recent Public Health White Paper, will be expanded, with an emphasis on reaching young people and other hard to reach groups;

support for parents to help them discuss sex and relationship issues with their children (which is proven to result in more openness, later first sex and better contraception use);

improving both the quality of sex and relationships education in schools and out of school settings, and young people's access to contraception and sexual health advice services in community settings and general practice;

provision of enhanced support to teenage parents, to provide a pathway out of social exclusion, in particular through re-engagement in education and training; and better partnership working between local health and education partners through the "Healthy Schools" programme and the establishment of Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Boards in each top tier local authority.

This multi-faceted approach was recommended in the Social Exclusion Unit's report on teenage pregnancy, published in 1999. The plan reflects the best international evidence of what works in reducing teenage pregnancies and supporting teenage parents. A subsequent review by the Health Development Agency in 2003, confirmed the evidence base for the strategy.

Between 1998 (the baseline year for the teenage pregnancy strategy) and 2002 (the latest year for which data are available) the rate of under-18 conceptions has fallen by 8.6 per cent. and the rate of under-16 conceptions by 11.2 per cent. The proportion of teenage parents engaged in education, employment or training has increased from 23.1 per cent. (average for 1997–99) to 29.7 per cent. (average for 2002–04).

TETRA System

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has discussed the health implications of the use of the TETRA system with representatives of those countries that already use the system. [210267]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Home Office asked the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) to look at the health and safety aspects of the TETRA technology used by Airwave. The NRPB's independent Advisory Group on Non-Ionising Radiation (AGNIR) drew on peer reviewed scientific literature from around the world in compiling the 2001 report on TETRA (Docs NRPB, Vol 12, No 8). The Home Office continues to liaise with the NRPB and the Department of Health who maintain contacts with the international scientific community.

The Home Office has provided information about its research programme to representatives from other countries.

Walsgrave Hospital

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the funding allocated to Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry for the next year. [210124]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* We do not allocate funding to national health service acute trusts. NHS acute trusts, as providers of services, receive the bulk of their revenue funding from commissioning by primary care trusts (PCTs). They also receive revenue funding from the Department for medical staff, education services and for research and development. In addition, acute trusts can charge staff, visitors or patients for services provided, such as catering or provision of private patient facilities.

For the next financial year (2005–06), Coventry PCT has been allocated £348 million, an increase of £29.6 million over the 2004–05 allocation. Future allocations will be announced shortly.

It is for PCTs, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders, to determine how best to use their funds to meet national and local priorities for improving health, tackling health inequalities and modernising services.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Beef Export Ban

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the Government will take steps to lift the beef export ban. [210746]

Mr. Pearson: Exports of beef from the UK can take place under the Date Based Export Scheme and six plants have been approved to export including four from Northern Ireland. A general lifting of the ban requires the European Commission to bring forward an appropriate proposal and the agreement of the other member states.

Any such proposal would only be made once the Over Thirty Month Rule has been ended in the UK and following a successful outcome of a further inspection visit from the EU's Food and Veterinary Office to check BSE controls and testing arrangements. This is likely to take until later this year.

In the meantime UK officials are working with the Commission on the detail of the arrangement to be put in place to facilitate the easing of the beef export restriction.

Counterfeit Pharmaceuticals

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the involvement of paramilitary organisations in the Province in the counterfeiting of pharmaceuticals. [210041]

Mr. Pearson: There is no evidence to suggest that Northern Ireland based paramilitary organisations are involved in the manufacture or supply of counterfeit pharmaceuticals. The Police Service of Northern Ireland and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety are acutely aware of the problems associated with counterfeit medicines in other countries and they continue to monitor the situation closely.

A quantity of illegal veterinary medicines was seized in a joint operation between the PSNI and DHSS&PS in April and May 2004. This followed a number of planned searches.

Fall-related Injuries

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* accident and emergency attendances and *(b)* hospital admissions there were in the Province for fall-related injuries in those aged (i) less than 60, (ii) 60 to 75 and (iii) more than 75 years in each of the last five years. [210071]

Mr. Gardiner: Information is not available on *(a)* the number of attendances at accident and emergency for fall-related injuries. However, information is available on *(b)* the number of admissions[1] to hospitals in Northern Ireland each year suffering from fall-related injuries for people aged (i) less than 60, (ii) 60 to 75 and (iii) more than 75 years, and is shown for the years 1999–2000 to 2003–04 in the table.

	Age group			
	0–59 years	*60–74 years*	*75 + years*	*Total*
1999–2000	6,248	1,887	3,856	11,991
2000–01	5,886	1,858	4,115	11,859
2001–02	5,572	1,803	3,878	11,253
2002–03	4,502	1,553	3,366	9,421
2003–04	4,615	1,573	3,688	9,876

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions.

Haemophilia Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the services available in the Province for haemophilia patients. [210023]

Angela Smith: Most services to haemophiliacs are provided in an outpatient primary care or community environment. In addition, the Haemophilia Centre based at Belfast City Hospital provides a regional service for patients with inherited and acquired bleeding disorders. Cover is provided by the Consultant team on a 24-hour basis. A vacancy currently exists for a Centre Director, which is being filled on an acting basis by a senior haematologist, but this has no direct impact on the service to patients.

House Sales

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will support the restriction of house sales to local people in areas of Northern Ireland where the local economy depends upon tourism, with particular reference to *(a)* Portballintrae, *(b)* Portstewart and *(c)* Castlerock, in a manner similar to that recently proposed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority. [210931]

Mr. Spellar: There are no plans at present to introduce the restriction of house sales to local people along the North Coast of Northern Ireland.

The house sales schemes of housing associations and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive give adequate protection for retaining housing in local areas as only the sitting tenant, with others living in the house, may buy that dwelling, and, in the event of re-sale within 10 years from the date of purchase, the dwelling must be offered to the social landlord from whom it was bought.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205810]

Mr. Pearson: The information is in the table.

	Number of staff receiving official warnings (verbal)	*Number of staff who faced disciplinary procedures*
1997	Nil	—
1998	Nil	—
1999	Nil	—
2000	2	1 formal
2001	4	1 informal/1 formal
2002	3	2 informal/1 formal
2003	12	—
2004	1	1 formal

John Lewis Store

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what his policy is on the proposal for a John Lewis store and associated development at Sprucefield; [210610]

(2) what plans he has for public consultation on the proposal for a John Lewis store at Sprucefield. [210939]

Angela Smith: Proposals for any retail development at Sprucefield must be judged against policies contained in the Regional Development Strategy, the current statutory development plan [Lisburn Area Plan 2001], the recently-published Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 (BMAP) and relevant Planning Policy Statements, in particular PPS5—retailing and Town Centres—a key objective of which is to sustain and enhance the vitality and viability of town centres.

Public consultation on the proposed development has been on-going for some time with the published notices in the local press in respect of the planning application and supporting documentation. The applicants are preparing further information requested by the Department and on receipt of this information a further public advertisement will be placed in the local press. Third parties will have at least 28 days to respond. As the application is being dealt with under the special procedures set out in Article 31 of the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991, the Department can ask the Planning Appeals Commission to hold a public inquiry if this is considered appropriate. No decision on a public inquiry has been taken at this stage.

Listed Buildings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many buildings in Northern Ireland have been newly listed by the Environmental and Heritage Service over the last three years. [210447]

Angela Smith: The total number of newly listed buildings in Northern Ireland from 1 April 2002 to date is 103. There were 44 new listings in 2002–03, 47 new listings in 2003–04 and 12 new listings in 2004–05 to date.

A list of the buildings newly listed during the period has been placed in the Library.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many visits by the President of the Irish Republic to Northern Ireland have taken place over the past three years; and what protocol was followed prior to each visit. [210445]

Mr. Paul Murphy: President McAleese visited Northern Ireland on 33 occasions during the three years 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2004. Nine of these visits were in a private capacity. For the remainder a Lord-Lieutenant or their representative greeted the President. Members of Parliament were advised, for information only, of the President's attendance at all public venues within their constituency.

Waiting Times (Orthopaedic)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time for patients in Northern Ireland to see an orthopaedic consultant is, broken down by Health and Social Services Board area. [211176]

Angela Smith: Waiting list information is collected by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean length of time waiting. It is however possible to identify the median or mid-point waiting time band.

The median time band for patients currently waiting for a first outpatient appointment in the trauma and orthopaedics specialty at 30 September 2004 for each Health and Social Services Board

Purchaser board	*Median time band (months)*
Eastern	12–14
Northern	3–5
Southern	3–5
Western	3–5
Other	6–8
Northern Ireland	6–8

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the longest time is that a patient has had to wait to see an orthopaedic consultant in Northern Ireland since 1997. [211177]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, the longest period that a patient was waiting for inpatient admission to the trauma and orthopaedic specialty at 31 December 2004 is 2,495 days.

The longest period that a patient was waiting for initial outpatient assessment to the trauma and orthopaedic specialty at 31 December 2004 is 2,254 days.

Peace Funding

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether there has been a disparity in the allocation of peace funding in the last five years. [210885]

Mr. Pearson: European peace funding is governed by the general principles of equality of opportunity and targeting social need that apply to all public expenditure and not on the basis of shares to any one group or community.

School Transport

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Department of Education or an education and library board have been subject to judicial review on home to school transport policy. [210772]

Mr. Gardiner: In the current financial year the Department and the North-Eastern Education and Library Board have jointly been party to one judicial review relating to the home to school transport policy. The application was dismissed.

Neither the Department nor the Education and Library Boards have been involved in any other judicial reviews this year in respect of the transport arrangements.

Special Units

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons *(a)* official publications referring to post-primary enrolments and *(b)* his Department's figures in the Costello Report exclude pupils in special units. [210771]

Mr. Gardiner: Departmental publications containing actual enrolments in mainstream schools normally include pupils in special units. When calculating school population projections, pupils in special units are projected and presented separately and therefore were not included in the projections presented in the Costello Report.

The inclusion or exclusion of pupils in special units has no impact on the year-on-year change in projected enrolments, as the number of pupils in special units is held constant in the calculations. If pupils in special units were included in the calculation of the projections, the projected decline of 2.1 per cent. in the post-primary school population from 2002–03 to 2004–05 would be the same.

Suicides

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many suicides there have been in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [210028]

Mr. Pearson: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for each year between 1994 and 2003 due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury"[1] and the number of registered deaths due to "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"[2].

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0 for years 2001–2003 and Ninth Revision codes E950-E959 for years 1994–2000.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2 for years 2001–03 and Ninth Revision codes E980-E989 for years 1994–2000.

Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"

Registration year	*Death due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury"*	*Death due to "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"*	*Total deaths due to "suicide and self-inflicted injury" or "undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted"*
1994	138	13	151
1995	122	24	146
1996	124	19	143
1997	120	18	138
1998	126	24	150
1999	121	33	154
2000	163	22	185
2001	141	17	158
2002	162	21	183
2003	132	12	144

Theft and Fraud

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the cost to each of the Government Departments in the Province of *(a)* theft and *(b)* fraud in each of the last six years. [210070]

Mr. Pearson: The cost of *(a)* theft and *(b)* fraud to each Northern Ireland Department (including agencies and NDPBs) for 2003–04 is as follows:

£

2003	*Theft*	*Fraud*
Department of Finance and Personnel	1,470	0
Department of Education	0	16,686
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	1,423	0
Department of Regional Development	1,143	0
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	185	1,203
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	3,616	290,104
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment/Department of Employment and Learning[1]	1,783	67,792
Department of the Environment	1,035	5
Department of Social Development	61,400	75,800
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	0	0
Total	72,055	451,590

[1] Figures include both Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and Department of Employment and Learning.

The cost of theft and fraud for the five previous years can only be shown in total for all Departments, as the cost of obtaining the information would be disproportionate.

£

	Cost of theft and fraud
2002–03	494,020
2001–02	518,235
2000–01	324,829
1999–2000	152,042
1998–99	204,617

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Armament Sales (China)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to consider human rights issues before permitting the sale of arms to China. [210078]

Mr. Rammell: This is already the case. Applications for licences to export arms and other goods controlled for strategic reasons are considered against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria. Criterion Two of the Code obliges the Government to refuse an export licence if there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from the US Administration in the past six months concerning the EU arms embargo on China. [210080]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Ruislip-Northwood (John Wilkinson) on 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1055–56W.

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Mike Gapes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place a copy of the United Kingdom Confidence-Building Measure return under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention for 2003 and subsequent years in the Library. [210277]

Mr. MacShane: Some States Party have now published their Confidence-Building Measure returns under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention on the internet. For example, the 2004 US return is on the US State Department website at http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/32486.pdf. This is a positive development in the interests of transparency. The Government are currently pursuing with those who provide the information for the UK return whether they are prepared to make their information publicly available, including returns from 2003 and 2004.

I will write to my hon. Friend when this consultation exercise is complete and will place a copy of the letter in the Library of the House.

Burkina Faso

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Government of Burkina Faso; what the topics of discussion were at that meeting; what the outcome was of the meeting; and if he will make a statement. [210791]

Mr. Mullin: A Foreign and Commonwealth Office official met the Burkinabe ambassador to London on 10 November 2004, and stressed the need for all Côte d'Ivoire's neighbours to help the international community's efforts to reach a peaceful solution in Côte d'Ivoire.

Burma

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens are held in prisons in Burma. [210095]

Mr. Mullin: We are not aware of any British nationals detained in Burma.

Chechnya

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has held in the past year with *(a)* EU governments and *(b)* the US Administration in connection with Russia's policy in Chechnya. [210076]

Mr. Rammell: Russia's policy in Chechnya has been a regular and frequent subject of discussion on a range of levels with US and EU governments during 2004, and has been discussed by European Foreign Ministers, including my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, at successive General Affairs and External Relations Councils.

We also pursued action on Chechnya in international organisations, including the EU, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, and at the UN Committee on Human Rights.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Russian Government in the past six months concerning human rights in Chechnya. [210077]

Mr. Rammell: The UK Government remain concerned about the human rights situation in Chechnya. Most worrying are the reports of extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detention and torture.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary most recently raised our concerns with the Russian Government when he met Foreign Minister Lavrov on his trip to Moscow in July 2004. Other Ministers and officials have continued to raise Chechnya with the Russian authorities at all levels since then, including at the annual UK/Russia human rights talks in September.

I intend to reinforce this message during my planned visit to Moscow in February and with Mr. Lukin, the Russian Human Rights Ombudsman, when he visits London at my invitation early in 2005.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the likelihood of free and fair elections being held in the Democratic Republic of Congo in June; and if he will make a statement. [210721]

Mr. Mullin; Free and fair elections are vital to a peaceful and prosperous Democratic Republic of Congo. Many challenges, both logistical and legislative, will need to be overcome if this target is to be met in the timetable laid out by the peace accords.

The UK continues to support the transitional Government's efforts to prepare for elections. We have announced a £5 million financial contribution to the United Nations administered trust fund for this financial year to support the process.

Côte D'Ivoire

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the impact on the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire of General Henri Poncet's announcement on 18 January on the willingness of the French force in Côte d'Ivoire to use force if asked to do so by the UN mission; and if he will make a statement. [210718]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome General Poncet's expressed willingness for French forces in Côte d'Ivoire to use necessary force when requested to do so by the UN Operation (UNOCI). This is provided for in UN Security Council resolution 1528 (2004). With UNOCI, French forces have helped preserve the peace by maintaining the zone of confidence separating the two sides, and have helped restore order after the recent violence; we value their continued support of UNOCI.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had since November 2004 with members and representatives of (i) the French government, (ii) the government of Côte d'Ivoire, (iii) the rebel forces in the north of Côte d'Ivoire and (iv) the UN regarding the (A) size and (B) nature of the French military deployment to Côte d'Ivoire; and if he will make a statement. [210722]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister met President Chirac on 18 January and discussed Côte d'Ivoire. The Prime Minister thanked President Chirac for the French role in supporting the UN operation. On 18 November my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary thanked Foreign Minister Barnier for French military assistance in the evacuation of British citizens.

Officials in London and Paris remain in regular contact with the French government about the situation in Côte d'Ivoire.

We also participate actively in Security Council discussions relating to Côte d'Ivoire as part of an on-going assessment of the roles and responsibility of the UN operation in Côte d'Ivoire.

Cyprus

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will arrange to meet representatives of the other guarantors of Cyprus to discuss the future of the island. [210063]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary regularly meets his Greek and Turkish counterparts. The Foreign Secretary met the Greek Foreign Minister on 2 December 2004, and met the Turkish Foreign Minister on 9 December 2004. On both occasions Cyprus was discussed, among other issues.

The Government will continue to work with all the parties towards a just, viable and lasting Cyprus settlement and urges the two communities, and in particular the Greek Cypriot side, to demonstrate the necessary political will to that end. We stand ready to assist the UN Secretary-General in any new settlement process and fulfil our responsibilities as a Guarantor Power. In the meantime, we will continue to work to implement the EU's policy to end the isolation of the Turkish Cypriots, in line with the appeal of the UN Secretary-General in his Report on his Mission of Good Offices of 28 May 2004.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent meetings he has held with Turkish Ministers to discuss the removal of Turkish troops from Cyprus. [R] [210096]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed a range of issues, including troops in Cyprus, with the Turkish Foreign Minister on 9 December 2004.

Our fundamental goal remains to work for a Cyprus settlement. The Turkish Government gave their full support to the UN Secretary-General's settlement plan, which included a provision for the phased withdrawal of Turkish troops down to a militarily insignificant level.

Diego Garica

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* the circumstances in which the Government of Mauritius told his Department that the Mauritius Shipping Company cancelled a visit to Diego Garcia for Chagossians and *(b)* the implementation of his undertaking to Chagossians that they be allowed to visit ancestral graves in the British Indian Ocean Territory. [210472]

Mr. Rammell: The British High Commission in Mauritius was informed in November 2004 by the Mauritius Shipping Corporation (MSC), a parastatal company, that the M/V Trochetia would be available for a visit to the British Indian Ocean Territory to take place in April. A provisional booking of the vessel was made on 29 December. In the meantime, I had written to the Mauritian Foreign Minister on 13 December to inform him of the visit and that we were entering into negotiation with the MSC. On 7 January the MSC informed the British High Commission that the M/V Trochetia could not be made available, and the Prime Minister of Mauritius told me on 13 January that it was he who had personally intervened to prevent its use because he felt it would undermine Mauritius' claim to sovereignty.

My officials are seeking to make alternative arrangements to enable the visit to go ahead.

European Constitution

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to employ the services of a private sector organisation to promote the European Constitution; and if he will make a statement. [210929]

Mr. MacShane: As part of on-going work to provide information to the UK public about the EU, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has employed a PR agency and is considering employing external support for partnership marketing and e-communications. This is entirely consistent with established practice—the majority of Government Departments engage outside agencies to deliver information and communications work in a cost-effective way.

John Cryer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what guidance he has issued to his Department's civil servants on their role prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union; [208549]

(2) what guidance he has issued to his Department's press officers on their role prior to and during the proposed referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union. [208557]

Mr. MacShane: Guidance to civil servants, including special advisers and members of the Government Information and Communication Service, on their conduct during the referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for the EU, and the period leading up to it, will be issued in due course. It will be made public. In addition, Section 125 of the provisions of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 will apply.

Iran

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the US Administration in the past six months concerning Iran and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. [210075]

Mr. MacShane: The Government continue to have a regular dialogue with the US Administration on a wide range of issues of mutual concern. The most recent discussion on Iran's nuclear programme took place during my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's visit to Washington this week.

Liberia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had since August 2003 with members and representatives of (i) the EU, (ii) the governments of the member states of the EU, (iii) the UN, (iv) the government of the US, (v) the government of Russia, (vi) the government of China, (vii) the government of Australia and (viii) the government of India regarding the economic and security situation in Liberia; and if he will make a statement. [210723]

Mr. Mullin: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Liberia with the then US Secretary of State Colin Powell in January 2004. I have attended two meetings of the International Contact Group on Liberia, where I met senior representatives of the US, UN, France and the EU. I also met senior UN, US and EU representatives during my visit to Liberia in November 2004; security and the economy were among the issues discussed.

UK officials regularly discuss Liberia with the EU and member states at the EU Africa Working Group and the Africa Caribbean Pacific Working Group. There is also frequent contact between UK, US, UN and EU officials in Monrovia, New York and London. This includes discussions over the deployment of Irish, Dutch and Swedish troops to the UN Mission in Liberia.

The UK has had discussions with officials from China and Russia in the margins of the Security Council discussions on Liberia at the UN. I am not aware of any discussions with the Governments of Australia or India.

Non-proliferation Treaty

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who the UK representatives will be at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in New York in May; and what proposals will be tabled by the UK Government. [210704]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies I gave him on 1 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 77W and 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 899W. The UK will send a full delegation to the 2005 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. The delegation will be led by Ambassador John Freeman, the UK Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. He will be accompanied by other experts and advisers to be decided.

We will stress the need for a stronger and more effective counter-proliferation regime and the central role of the NPT as its cornerstone. We will emphasise the importance of compliance with the treaty and will promote the adoption of safeguards. We will emphasise the strength of the UK's positive record on nuclear disarmament and we will present a final report of the studies we have conducted on the verification of nuclear disarmament.

Palestine

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will meet representatives of the Palestinian authorities following the recent election. [210062]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will meet recently-elected Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and representatives of the Palestinian Authority at the London Meeting on strengthening the Palestinian Authority. This will take place on 1 March. We will also hold bilateral contacts and meetings with the Palestinian leadership as necessary in the run-up to the London Meeting.

Serbia and Montenegro

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Government of Serbia and Montenegro requesting that they hand over war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague. [210232]

Mr. MacShane: The UK Government continue to take every opportunity—both bilaterally and in multilateral fora—to make clear to the Government of Serbia and Montenegro (SaM), as well as to the competent authorities in Belgrade and in Podgorica, their international obligations, under Chapter VII UN Security Council Resolutions, to co-operate fully with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

Most recently, during the visit of SaM President Svetozar Marovic and other State Union Ministers to the UK, I—together with my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence and other Ministers—emphasised that the arrest or surrender and transfer to The Hague of fugitive indictees, in particular Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, is the key requirement for the country's closer integration with Euro-Atlantic structures.

Sir Mark Thatcher (South Africa)

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK Government officials were involved in the proceedings relating to Sir Mark Thatcher in South Africa. [210073]

Mr. Mullin: No. Officials from our Consulate General in Cape Town provided Sir Mark Thatcher with appropriate consular assistance.

VE Day Celebrations

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans his Department has for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of Victory in Europe day. [210578]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will participate in the major commemorations held on Sunday 10 July 2005 which will incorporate the anniversaries of the cessation of hostilities in Europe and the Far East and are being organised by the Ministry of Defence.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Antisocial Behaviour Response Courts

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the establishment of the antisocial response courts. [210725]

Mr. Leslie: Antisocial behaviour response courts are magistrates courts, which have a particular focus in dealing with antisocial behaviour cases as effectively as possible, in co-operation with local agencies.

The key features of antisocial behaviour response courts are:

Dealing with cases swiftly and efficiently;

Providing high-level witness care;

Ensuring magistrates and court staff are fully trained and aware of local issues and concerns;

Working closely with the other criminal justice agencies;

Identifying an individual with specific responsibility for co-ordinating the courts' response; and

Holding specialist sessions, where appropriate.

Within this framework, it is a matter for local management to decide how the courts should operate in their areas.

Antisocial behaviour response courts were originally established in summer 2004 in 12 areas, including Merseyside. The location of these courts was chosen to link up with the appointment of specialist Crown Prosecutors in these areas. Since then antisocial behaviour response courts have been identified across England and Wales. On 21 January 2004 Lord Falconer announced the identification of the 100th antisocial behaviour response court. Lessons learned from the original 12 courts have also been circulated to courts across England and Wales, to ensure that all courts are aware of best practice in their handling of ASB cases.

Further antisocial behaviour response courts will be identified in areas where there is a need.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what advice is issued to asylum adjudicators regarding the grounds for granting refugee status to applicants who have fled persecution because of their homosexuality. [210707]

Mr. Leslie: Immigration Adjudicators are independent members of the judiciary, and as such no specific advice or guidance is issued in relation to claims based on an appellant's sexuality. Immigration Adjudicators will determine each asylum appeal based on their own findings of fact and by applying the law as established to that particular claim.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training in sexuality issues is given to asylum case adjudicators who handle asylum applications based on persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation. [210710]

Mr. Leslie: Immigration adjudicators are independent members of the judiciary who determine each asylum appeal based on their own findings of fact and by applying the law as established to that particular claim. The training of immigration adjudicators is organised and facilitated by senior judicial members of the Immigration Appellate Authority.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he intends to answer the letter dated 15 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Thomas Gill. [210837]

Mr. Leslie: I can confirm that the hon. Member's letter was received on 20 December. Unfortunately, however, it has been mislaid. Arrangements have been made to obtain a further copy and the Secretary of State will write to the right hon. Member soon. I apologise for this unfortunate incident.

District Judges

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many district judges there have been in each year since 1997. [210972]

Mr. Leslie: The number of district and deputy district judges in post for each year since 1997 are set out in the following table.

	District judge (including family division)	*Deputy district judge (including family division)*	*Stipendiary magistrates[1]/district judge (magistrates court)*	*Acting stipendiary magistrates[1]/deputy district judge (magistrates court)*
1997	337	[2]—	91	85
1998	355	725	90	82
1999	379	760	93	95
2000	402	750	96	146
2001	419	761	98	166
2002	434	775	103	156
2003	426	785	104	176
2004	434	801	106	174

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[1] On 31 August 2000 stipendiary magistrates and acting stipendiary magistrates were renamed district judges (magistrates court) and deputy district judges (magistrates court).

[2] Figure not available.

Royal Charters

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if the Government will take steps to make a complete list of Royal Charters and their provisions available to the public. [210872]

Mr. Leslie: Since the year 1231, over 940 charters have been issued. There are about 400 still in force, but the exact number cannot be determined without historical research which is outside the capacity of the Privy Council Office.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs which Royal Charters granting rights to trade in certain areas also restrict trade within that area; and when these were awarded. [210873]

Mr. Leslie: The Privy Council Office does not hold this information.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are taken to enforce conditions attached to Royal Charters, and who is responsible for doing so. [211037]

Mr. Leslie: The grant of a Royal Charter is not subject to conditions.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Department has investigated whether any Royal Charter contravenes the European Convention on Human Rights; what steps are taken to ensure that Royal Charters conform to the Convention; and whether court cases have arisen in relation to the conformity of Royal Charters with the European Convention. [211038]

Mr. Leslie: It is not part of the function of the Privy Council Office to carry out such investigations.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what Government policy is regarding the future award of Royal Charters; and if he will make a statement. [211039]

Mr. Leslie: The Privy Council will continue to advise Her Majesty to grant Royal Charters in cases where this is in the public interest.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he received relating to the consultation on amendments to Part L of the building regulations to the effect that organisations accredited as competent under the Council for Registered Gas Installers and the Oil Firing Technical Association are *(a)* fully qualified and *(b)* under-qualified to assess whole heating systems; and if he will make a statement. [210888]

Phil Hope: During last year's consultation on amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received some representations that the CORGI and OFTEC Competent Persons schemes do not cover works on whole heating systems to the extent that they could. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are now working closely with CORGI, OFTEC and other organisations to see what changes are needed to improve the scope of the Competent Persons Schemes in relation to Part L.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the potential for *(a)* lowering fuel bills and *(b)* reducing carbon emissions by amendment of Part L of the Buildings Regulations. [210923]

Phil Hope: The most recent assessment is contained in the consultation document published last July by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. That document contains proposals to raise the standards in Part L this year in line with the commitments in the Energy White Paper. As normal the proposals aim to achieve substantial improvements consistent with Better Regulation policy, cost-effectiveness, design flexibility and the avoidance of excessive technical risks.

Council Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total income in capital receipts was from the sale of council housing under the right-to-buy in 2003–04, broken down by *(a)* debt free and *(b)* indebted local authorities. [209698]

Keith Hill: Total receipts from council right-to-buy sales in England for 2003–04 are estimated at £3,025 million, of which £338 million are from those local authorities who were debt-free as at 1 April 2003. The remaining receipts (£2687 million) are from indebted local authorities.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session broken down by Act. [206792]

Yvette Cooper: The criminal offences created in legislation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in *(a)* 2002–03 are:

Local Government Act 2003

Section 43(4D) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (inserted by section 61 of the LG Act 2003) makes it an offence to give false information on a small business rate relief application.

The criminal offences created in legislation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in *(b)* 2003–04 are:

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCPA) 2004

Section 52 inserts sections 171E to 171G into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which relate to temporary stop notices. Under section 171G a person commits an offence if he contravenes a temporary stop notice.

Section 105 inserts a new section 5A and a new section 5B into the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. Under the new section 5B (1) a person is guilty of an offence if he fails without reasonable excuse to comply with a notice (for information) served on him under section 5A. A person also commits an offence under section 5B (2) if in response to such a notice he gives information which is materially false and knows, or ought to know, that the information is false. Under subsection (3) if a body corporate commits an offence under this section and it is found that this was done with the consent, connivance or neglect of a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer, or a person purporting to act in any such capacity, he shall also be found guilty of such an offence.

Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 created the following offences in England and Wales, re-enacting provisions previously contained in the Fire Services Act 1947:

Section 40(4) Emergency supply by water undertaker

A water undertaker commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, it fails to take any step which it is obliged to take under subsection 40(1).

Section 42(6) Fire hydrants

A person commits an offence if he uses a fire hydrant otherwise than:

(a) for the purposes of fire-fighting or for any other purposes of a fire and rescue authority, or

(b) for any purpose authorised by the water undertaker or other person to whom the hydrant belongs.

Section 42(7) Fire hydrants

A person commits an offence if he damages or obstructs a fire hydrant, otherwise than in consequence of use for the purposes mentioned in section 42(6).

Section 43(4) Notice of works affecting water supply and hydrants

A person commits an offence if, without reasonable excuse, he fails to give notice as required by section 43(1) or 43(2).

Section 44(3) Powers of firefighters etc. in an emergency etc.

A person commits an offence if without reasonable excuse he obstructs or interferes with an employee of a fire and rescue authority taking action authorised under this section.

Section 46(6) Supplementary powers

A person commits an offence if without reasonable excuse:

(a) he obstructs the exercise of any power under section 45 or section 46, or

(b) he fails to comply with any requirement under section 46(1)(b) or 46(2)(g).

Section 49(1) False alarms of fire

A person commits an offence if he knowingly gives or causes to be given a false alarm of fire to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority.

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 created the following offence in England, Scotland and Wales, re-enacting provisions previously contained in the Fire Services Act 1947:

Section 34(6) Pensions

A person commits an offence if he does an act or makes an omission as a result of which he is injured or becomes ill, for the purpose of obtaining, for himself or another person

(a) an award under a scheme brought into operation under this section, or

(b) a sum in respect of the repayment or application of contributions made under such a scheme.

Housing Act 2004

23 Offences have been created under the Housing Act 2004.

Under section 30(1) an offence is committed where an improvement notice has become operative and the person on whom the notice was served fails to comply with it.

Under section 32(1) a person commits an offence if, knowing that a prohibition order has become operative in relation to any specified premises, he:

(a) uses the premises in contravention of the order, or

(b) permits the premises to be so used.

Section 35 provides that where an improvement notice or a prohibition order has been served by the local housing authority under Part 1 of the Act requiring specific action to be taken as respects premises and a person is preventing the action from being taken, a magistrates' court may, in certain circumstances, order the person to permit to be done on the premises anything which the court considers is necessary or expedient for the purpose of enabling the required action to be taken. Under section 35(4), a person who fails to comply with such an order of the court commits an offence.

Under section 72(1) a person commits an offence if he is a person having control of or managing an HMO which is required to be licensed under Part 2 of the Act (licensing of HMOs) but is not so licensed.

Under section 72(2) a person commits an offence if:

(a) he is a person having control of or managing an HMO which is licensed under Part 2 of the Act,

(b) he knowingly permits another person to occupy the house, and

(c) the other person's occupation results in the house being occupied by more households or persons than is authorised by the licence.

Under section 72(3) a person commits an offence if:

(a) he is a licence holder or a person on whom restrictions or obligations under a licence are imposed in accordance with section 67(5), and

(b) he fails to comply with any condition of the licence.

Under section 95(1) a person commits an offence if he is a person having control of or managing a house which is required to be licensed under Part 3 of the Act (selective licensing of private landlords) but is not so licensed.

Under section 95(2)a person commits an offence if:

(a) he is a licence holder or a person on whom restrictions or obligations under a licence are imposed in accordance with section 90(6), and

(b) he fails to comply with any condition of that licence.

Section 131 confers on local housing authorities a power to enter a house subject to a management order made under Part 4 of the Act in order to carry out works. A magistrates' court may order a person preventing the carrying out of works to permit to be done on the premises anything which the authority considers necessary. A person who fails to comply with such an order of the court commits an offence.

Under section 139(7) a person who contravenes an overcrowding notice served in respect of an HMO under section 139(2) commits an offence.

Regulations under Part 5 of the Act may require home information packs to contain home condition reports prepared by members of an approved certification scheme. The regulations may also provide for the keeping of a register of such reports. Section 165(4) prohibits a person from disclosing the register or documents or information in or derived from the register and under section 165(7) a person who contravenes this prohibition is guilty of an offence.

Under section 169(1) a person who obstructs an officer of the authority which is an enforcement authority for the purposes of Part 5 of the Act (home information packs) acting in pursuance of his power to require production of a home information pack is guilty of an offence.

Under section 169(2) a person who, not being an authorised officer of an enforcement authority, purports to act as such in requiring production of a home information pack, or in giving a penalty charge notice for a breach of duty under Part 5 of the Act, is also guilty of an offence.

Section 210(3) inserts a new subsection (1A) into section 3 of the Caravan Sites Act 1968. Under new section 3(1A) the owner of a protected site or his agent is guilty of an offence if:

(a) he acts in a way which is likely to interfere with the peace or comfort of the occupier or persons residing with him, or

(b) if he persistently withdraws or withholds services or facilities reasonably required for the occupation of the caravan as a residence on the site, during the subsistence of, or after the expiration or determination of a residential contract, and (in either case) he knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, that that conduct is likely to cause the occupier to do any of the things mentioned in subsection *(1)(c)*(i) or (ii) of the section 3.

Section 234 gives the appropriate national authority the power to make regulations for the purpose of ensuring that, in respect of every house in multiple occupation of a description specified in the regulations:

(a) there are in place satisfactory management arrangements; and

(b) satisfactory standards of management are observed.

Under section 234(3) a person commits an offence if he does not comply with regulations made under this section.

Under section 236(1) a person commits an offence if he fails to do anything required of him by a notice under section 235 (power to require documents to be produced).

Under section 236(4)a person commits an offence if he intentionally alters, suppresses or destroys any document which he has been required to produce by a notice under section 235.

Under section 238(1) a person commits an offence if:

(a) he supplies any information to a local housing authority in connection with any of their functions under any of Parts 1 to 4 or Part 7 of the Act,

(b) the information is false or misleading, and

(c) he knows that it is false or misleading or is reckless as to whether it is false or misleading.

Under section 238(2) a person commits an offence if:

(a) he supplies any information to another person which is false or misleading,

(b) he knows that it is false or misleading or is reckless as to whether it is false or misleading, and

(c) he knows that the information is to be used for the purpose of supplying information to a local housing authority in connection with any of their functions under any of Parts 1 to 4 or Part 7 of the Act.

Under section 241 a person who obstructs a relevant person in the performance of anything which, by virtue of any of Parts 1 to 4 or Part 7 of the Act, that person is required or authorised to do commits an offence.

Paragraph 25 of Schedule 7 gives the local housing authority, or any person authorised by them, the right to enter any part of a dwelling which is subject to an interim or final empty dwelling management order, at any reasonable time, for the purpose of carrying out works. Where any occupier notified of the intention to exercise this right prevents an officer, employee, agent or contractor of the local housing authority from carrying out the work a magistrates' court may order him to permit to be done on the premises anything which the authority consider to be necessary. Under paragraph 25(4) of Schedule 7 a person who fails to comply with such an order commits an offence.

Paragraph 25 of Schedule 11 inserts a new paragraph 20A into Schedule 1 to the Housing Act 1996. This new paragraph provides that any person who, in purported compliance with a notice given under paragraph 20A (notice to give evidence to an inquiry into the affairs of a registered social landlord) knowingly or recklessly provides any information which is false or misleading in a material particular commits an offence.

Paragraph 26(3) of Schedule 11 inserts new sub-paragraphs (4)-(6) in to paragraph 21 of Schedule 1 to the Housing Act 1996. These new paragraphs provide that any person who, in purported compliance with a notice given under paragraph 21 (notice to give information to an inquiry) knowingly or recklessly provides any information which is false or misleading in a material particular commits an offence.

Flood Risks

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to introduce measures to increase the resilience of domestic oil tanks to the risk of flooding on flood plains. [210924]

Phil Hope: There are currently no plans to introduce such measures. Pollution risks from domestic oil tanks have been addressed in the Building Regulations since 1 April 2002 and it would be premature to amend the provisions without the results of a survey of implementation starting later this year. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware that the perception of domestic oil pollution risks is changing, and it is considering with the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Environment Agency what additional technical guidance may be necessary.

Government Grants

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* housing, *(b)* regeneration and *(c)* social exclusion scheme funding streams the Government has operated since May 1997; and which are still in operation. [209705]

Keith Hill: The following funding streams are currently in operation:

Housing

Arms Length Management Organisations

Best Value Intervention in Housing

Black and Minority Ethnic Registered Social Landlords

Clawback compensation grant (housing receipts)

Disabled Facilities Grants

Estate Action

Gypsy Site Grant

Homelessness (previously separate funding streams relating to Bed & Breakfast, Rough Sleepers, Homelessness Strategies and the Priority Needs Order)

Housing Action Trusts

Housing Bill Implementation (Home Buying & Selling, Landlord Licensing and Safety Ratings, Tenants Deposit Scheme)

Housing Defects Grants/Loan Charges

Housing Management Grants

Housing Mobility Grants

Housing Revenue Account Subsidy

Large Scale Voluntary Transfers—gap funding and repayment of overhanging debt

Leasehold Enfranchisement Advisory Service

Local Authority funding of Pilot Letting Schemes

Local Authority Social Housing Grant—Transitional Compensation

Private Housing Renewal

Private Landlords in Low Demand Areas

Procurement Efficiency & Social Housing

Residential Property Tribunal Service

Safer Communities Supported Housing Fund

Single Housing Capital Pot (includes Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Local Authority Supported Capital Expenditure for Housing)

Starter Homes Initiative

Supporting People

The National Approved Letting Scheme

Regeneration

Coalfields funding (Enterprise Fund and Regeneration Trust)

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Design Awards

English Partnerships (including Commission for the New Towns)

European Regional Development Fund

Groundwork & National Urban Forestry Unit

Housing Market Renewal Fund

Interreg (European funding stream)

Lea Valley Regional Park

Liveability Fund

Living Spaces

Mersey Basin

New Deal for Communities

New Ventures Fund

Other Growth Areas

Regional Development Agencies (including London Development Agency)

Single Regeneration Budget

Special Grants Programme

Thames Gateway

Trees & Hedges

Urban Design Skills

The following funding streams have existed at some point since May 1997 but are no longer in operation:

Housing

British Board of Agreement

Estates Renewal Challenge Fund

Rent Officer Services

Regeneration

Central Manchester Regeneration

Challenge Fund Grants

Coalfields Housing

Greenwich Millennium

Public Space Improvement Programme

Urban Development Corporations—post wind-up

The Government also fund the work of the Social Exclusion Unit. The Unit does not administer funding streams directly but does work with government departments and other stakeholders to ensure that a wide range of Government funding programmes contribute to the reduction of social exclusion.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also funds research on housing, regeneration and social exclusion.

Housing Associations

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish an annual summary for the next three years of planned improvements to housing association stock. [208485]

Keith Hill: The information requested is not held centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. However, Housing Associations supply the Housing Corporation with forecast spend on planned maintenance and major repairs, both of which may include works classed as "improvements." The totals for these two for 2005–06 to 2007–08 are as follows;

	Total £
2005–06	1,921,719
2006–07	1,886,966
2007–08	1,834,596

Housing Benefit

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of *(a)* council tenants and *(b)* housing association tenants are on housing benefit, broken down by local authority area. [210622]

Keith Hill: A table showing the percentage of housing association tenants in local authority areas in England who receive housing benefit in 2004 has been made available in the Library of the House.

Data for local authority tenants are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of tenants of *(a)* housing associations and *(b)* local authorities received housing benefit in each of the last five years. [210623]

Keith Hill: The following table gives the percentage of housing association tenants in England who receive housing benefit in the last five years.

Percentage of housing association tenants in receipt of housing benefit 2000–04

	Benefit	*No benefit*	*Unknown*
2000	64.5	19.5	16.0
2001	61.9	21.3	16.8
2002	60.4	22.1	17.3
2003	58.1	22.7	19.2
2004	57.6	23.0	19.3

There are no comparable data for local authority tenants.

New Charter

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether New Charter are *(a)* ensuring acceptable behaviour from tenants and *(b)* evicting tenants who do not behave in an acceptable way in Tameside. [210665]

Keith Hill: The Audit Commission are responsible for assessing New Charter Housing Trusts' performance on antisocial behaviour. Their latest assessment awarded New Charter the highest rating possible on dealing with antisocial behaviour.

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to verify how far *(a)* New Charter and *(b)* Pioneer Homes have fulfilled the undertakings made to tenants in prospectuses issued on taking over council housing in Tameside. [210666]

Keith Hill: New Charter Housing Trust and Ashton Pioneer Homes are regulated by The Housing Corporation.

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what redress tenants of New Charter Housing in Tameside have in the event of failure by New Charter Housing to meet its obligations on Rose Hill estate. [210667]

Keith Hill: Tenants of New Charter Housing are entitled to use the internal complaints procedure of the association. Should tenants be unhappy with the response from the association they have the right to lodge a complaint with the Housing Ombudsman who will investigate and where appropriate make recommendations.

Ultimately, tenants have legal redress against New Charter Housing for any significant failure of service. Where an association fails to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Code, the Housing Corporation will take action. New Charter Housing has also introduced a compensation policy to cover service failure.

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make provision for tenants of New Charter to have a new ballot on *(a)* moving to a new housing association and *(b)* returning to Tameside council tenancy. [210668]

Keith Hill: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to make provision for tenants of New Charter Housing Trust to have a new ballot.

Regional Chambers

David Maclean: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will issue guidance to *(a)* members of and *(b)* contributors to unelected regional chambers on where legal liability resides when a law suit is brought against the chamber; and if he will make a statement. [210919]

Mr. Raynsford: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to issue such guidance.

Social Housing

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the 14,000 social housing units planned to be funded with Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant were built in 2003–04; and how many he estimates will be completed in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [209699]

Keith Hill: In 2003–04 a total of 4,916 homes were completed with funding through Transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG).

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's current estimates for transitional LASHG schemes to complete in 2004–05 and 2005–06 are that 4,800 and 2,200 homes will be provided.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much private capital arm's length housing transfers have contributed to housing since they started; and how much the Government has paid to them to date. [210638]

Keith Hill: Arms length management organisations (ALMOs) set up by local authorities to manage their social housing stock are financed entirely by public funds and receive no private capital. The Government's support for qualifying ALMOs was £56 million in 2002–03 and £321 million in 2003–04, and is forecast to be about £590 million in 2004–05.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many arm's length management organisations (ALMOs) have not been given all the money promised by Government before start up; how much has been held back; from which ALMOs; and for what reasons. [210650]

Keith Hill: All offers of Government funding for Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) are conditional on the local authority receiving approval from the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister to delegate its housing management functions to the ALMO and the ALMO being awarded a two or three star rating from the Housing Inspectorate. No funding has been held back from any ALMOs on the programmes that have fulfilled these conditions.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many registered social landlords have not maintained their guarantees to existing tenants in large scale voluntary transfers not to increase the rents for five years. [210654]

Keith Hill: The Housing Corporation and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are not aware of any transfer Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) that have been unable to honour the rent guarantees given to tenants when consulted on a housing transfer. Since 2002 any such guarantees have been required to comply with policy for rent restructuring in the local authority and RSL sectors.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* council tenants and *(b)* former council tenants have transferred to (i) registered social landlords and (ii) arm's length management organisations exercising their right to buy in each year since 1995. [211095]

Keith Hill: Figures for council and registered social landlord right to buy sales for England since 1995–96 are tabled as follows.

Number of right to buy sales

Thousand

	(a) local authority	*(b) registered social landlord*
1995–96	31.5	2.9
1996–97	33.2	2.4
1997–98	41.3	4.5
1998–99	40.3	4.4
1999–2000	54.3	7.2
2000–01	52.4	7.1 (of which 5.2 preserved right to buy)
2001–02	52.0	8.2 (of which 6.7 preserved right to buy)
2002–03	63.4 (of which at least 3.3 from ALMO)	10.5 (of which 8.9 preserved right to buy)
2003–04	69.6 (of which at least 8.9 from ALMO)	14.5 (of which 11.7 preserved right to buy)

Prior to 2002–03, sales from Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO) are assumed to be nil. Figures on Preserved Right to Buy are not available prior to 2000–01.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average rent levels for *(a)* housing association tenants and *(b)* council tenants have been in each of the last four years. [210626]

Keith Hill: The average weekly rents for housing association tenants and local authority tenants in the year to April are tabled as follows:

Average weekly rent for social housing tenants by tenure in

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Housing association	53.29	55.53	57.05	58.34
Local authority	47.87	49.93	50.96	[1]52.78

[1] provisional

Sources:

Housing Corporation HAR/10, RSR (Regulatory and Statistical Return) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Second Advance Claim Form.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209571]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. The amount spent on advertising staff vacancies in 2002 and 2003 was £241,966 and £259,712 respectively.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 27 January 2005

TREASURY

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many items of civil service property within his Department [illegible] unaccounted for, broken down by type; [205567]

(2) if he will list the property belonging to his Department that has *(a)* been stolen and *(b)* been reported lost in each year since 1997, broken down by type of article. [206367]

Mr. Timms: Items recorded by the Treasury as lost or stolen are listed in the Following table.

	Item	*Number/cost*
1997	Desktop computers	3
	Laptop computers	2
	Telephone answering machines	2
	Foreign currency	£150
1998	Laptop computer	1
1999	Desktop computer	1
	Laptop computers	2
2000	Laptop computer	1
	Disk drives	2
	Projector	1
2001	Laptop computers	2
	Personal organiser	1
2002	Desktop computers	2
	Laptop computers	22
	Monitors	3
	Safedial cards	5
	Projector	1
	Personal organisers	11
	CD writer	1
	Mobile phone	1
2003	Desktop computer	1
	Laptop computers	9
	Safedial cards	2
	Personal organisers	2
	Mobile phones	3
2004	Laptop computers	4
	Safedial cards	6
	Personal organiser	1
	Mobile phones	3

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list businesses and individuals entertained by him and his Department at public expense in the last 12 months; [209422]

(2) how much money his Department has spent on corporate entertainment in each of the last seven years. [209423]

Mr. Timms: In respect of the Treasury's spending on corporate entertainment, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1084W. The details of the businesses and individuals entertained by the Department could be provided only at disproportionate cost, because this information is not recorded centrally in electronic form. All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

Economic Statistics

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in which years since 1975 *(a)* interest rates and *(b)* mortgage rates have been lower than the current levels. [211010]

Mr. Timms: The Bank of England repo rate and the average mortgage interest rate reached their lowest points in 2004 and have remained below 1970s levels ever since.

EU Funding

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 653W, on EU funding, what the sum total is to date in real terms that has not been signed off by the Court of Auditors, broken down by year; and what the UK percentage share of the total EU budget was for each year. [207112]

Mr. Timms *[pursuant to his reply, 11 January 2005, Official Report, c. 440W]:* My earlier answer inadvertently contained some incorrect figures, for which I apologise. It should have read as follows:

The figures for the years 1994 onwards (when the annual Statement of Assurance was introduced), showing the total for each year and the sum total to date, and the UK's percentage share, are as follows:

	Total budget not signed off (£ million)[1]	*Percentage UK contribution*[2] *(Post-abatement)*
1994	43,903	10.00
1995	51,627	13.64
1996	58,388	11.56
1997	52,055	11.86
1998	51,286	15.24
1999	49,896	13.43
2000	47,952	15.76
2001	46,719	9.59
2002	49,161	13.07
2003	60,854	11.92
Total budget not signed off (1992 to 2003)	511,841	

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[1] Taken from data published in Table 1A of respective European Community Finances White Papers, less administrative expenditure (also less pre-accession aid expenditure in 2002). Latest White Paper (Cm 6134) (ISBN 0-10-161342-3) was published on 22 April 2004 and the figures for the period 1999 to 2003 have been taken from this.

[2] Calculated from data published in European Commission Reports on the Allocation of EU Operating Expenditure.

It is important to note that the failure of any part of the Community Budget to gain a positive Statement of Assurance does not mean that the whole of that part of the budget was misspent. Rather, it means that the European Court of Auditors found a number of errors in the small sample audited in any particular year.

EU Structural Funding

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the effect on the net UK contribution to the EU of returning structural fund expenditure to national control for the 2007–13 funding period. [209604]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The UK's proposals for reform of structural and cohesion funds for the period 2007–13 would not "return structural fund expenditure to national control", but rather would focus EC funding on the poorest member states where it would have greatest effect, under an overarching EU framework.

Financial Services Industry

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on Government support for the financial services industry in the last financial year. [210902]

Mr. Timms: The financial services industry is a vital sector for the UK economy, contributing over 5 per cent. of total output and generating a trade surplus of £15.6 billion in 2003. The Government recognise the importance of this sector and take steps to maintain their competitiveness, both domestically and internationally, through a number of different routes; including principally by building and maintaining an effective regulatory model, especially in view of initiatives under the EU's Financial Services Action Plan (FSAP); encouraging a skilled work force; and, by delivering a strong, stable macroeconomic environment. In this context, the Government are committed to a dialogue with the financial services industry to ensure that FSAP and other measures are implemented in an effective, proportionate and consistent way.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 986W, on parliamentary questions, if he will break down the estimated cost of answering a parliamentary question into its component elements; and which costs relate to staff time. [211449]

Mr. Timms: Staff salaries (excluding the costs of Ministers and their private offices) account for 85 per cent. of the estimated cost and other overheads the remaining 15 per cent.

Psychiatric Patient Deaths

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many patients have died in psychiatric hostels in the west midlands in each of the last three years. [210798]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 27 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many patients have died in psychiatric hostels in the West Midlands in each of the last three years. (210798)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. Figures showing deaths of patients in psychiatric hostels are not separately available. Available figures are for deaths occurring in psychiatric institutions. Figures for the years 2001 to 2003 are given in the attached table.

Deaths in psychiatric institutions[1], West Midlands[2], 2001–03[3]

	Number of deaths
2001	219
2002	215
2003	258

[1] Psychiatric institutions were defined as NHS and non-NHS psychiatric hospitals, psychiatric units and psychiatric security hospitals.
[2] Deaths to residents of West Midlands Government office region.
[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in 2001 to 2003.

Public Spending

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the total levels of spending on *(a)* the national health service, *(b)* education and *(c)* the criminal justice system in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest period for which figures are available. [211054]

Mr. Boateng: Total UK public spending on the national health service, education and criminal justice system, in 1997–98 and 2003–04, the latest outturn year, is shown as follows in real terms (2003–04 prices).

	1997–98 (£ million)	*2003–04 (£ million)*	*Year-on-year real terms increase (percentage)*
National health service	51,848	74,889	6.3
Education	43,391	59,489	5.4
Criminal justice	17,354	22,967	4.8

Source:
Based on National Statistics release of 2 December 2004 (Pn 99/04) and latest GDP from 23 December 2004.

Red Diesel

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how much red diesel was consumed in each month since the fuel duty rate provisions set in the 2003 Budget took effect; and if he will make a statement; [211399]

(2) how much red diesel has been consumed in each month since the introduction of new fuel duty rates on 1 September 2004; and if he will make a statement. [211400]

John Healey: Hydrocarbon oils clearance figures are published by HM Customs and Excise in the Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which can be found on the UK Trade Information website www.uktradeinfo.com.

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what his target differential is between the prices of red diesel and road diesel; what further increases in duty levels he expects to make to meet this target; and when he expects that the target will be met; [211401]

(2) what assessment the Government have made of the impact of the recent rise in the duty on red diesel on *(a)* farmers, *(b)* the boating industry and *(c)* the plant industry; and if he will make a statement. [211402]

John Healey: Oils fraud has significant Exchequer costs. The narrowing of the duty differential is one component of a wider fraud strategy and there is no target rate. Decisions on duty rates are taken on a Budget-by-Budget basis by the Chancellor, who takes account of all relevant social, economic and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy. Decisions on duty rates will be set out in the Budget.

Unemployment

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the level of unemployment has been lower in any year since 1975 than the current level of unemployment. [211009]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 27 January 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about levels of unemployment since 1975. (211009)

Consistent series for unemployment since 1971, based on International Labour Organisation definitions, show that since 1975, unemployment has been lower than its current level of 1,400,000 on seven occasions. In date order, these were:

Three months ending	*Level*
January 1976	1,343,000
February 1976	1,363,000
March 1976	1,379,000
April 1976	1,392,000
August 2004	1,387,000
September 2004	1,380,000
October 2004	1,388,000

Based on the same source, the unemployment rate has been lower than its current level of 4.7 per cent. on only one occasion. This was in the three months ending September 2004, when the rate was 4.6 per cent.

These estimates are based on the Labour Force Survey (LFS). Estimates from 1992 are taken directly from the LFS, whilst figures prior to 1992 are modelled estimates consistent with the post-1992 LFS data. The LFS is a sample survey and, as with any statistical sample survey, results are subject to sampling variability.

Unemployment (Nottingham)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were unemployed in the Nottingham, North constituency *(a)* in June 1997 and *(b)* on the last date for which figures are available; and how many of each were young people. [211013]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Graham Allen, dated 27 January 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about unemployment in the Nottingham North Parliamentary Constituency. (211013)

The attached table (1), gives estimates of the total number of unemployed people who were resident in the Nottingham North Parliamentary Constituency, for the twelve month periods ending February 1998 and February 2004, the most recent available period. The table also shows the number of those who were aged 16–24 years old.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. The attached table (2) gives the total number of claimants and those aged 18 to 24 years old, resident in the Nottingham North Constituency claiming JSA benefits in June 1997 and December 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in the Nottingham, North parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Total (aged 16 and over)*	*Young people (aged 16–24)*
1998	6,000	2,000
2004	2,000	[1]—

[1] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:

Some of these estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a higher degree of sampling variability. They should therefore be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey.

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the Nottingham, North parliamentary constituency

	All claimants[1]	*Young people claimants (aged 18–24)*[1]
June 1997	3,945	1,000
December 2004	2,130	745

[1] Computerised claims only; not seasonally adjusted.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

VAT

Paul Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was raised from VAT on *(a)* alcohol and *(b)* tobacco in each of the last five years. [211286]

John Healey: Tobacco and alcohol duty revenue figures are published by HM Customs and Excise in the Tobacco and alcohol fact sheets, copies of which are available in the Library of the House and from Customs' website at www.uktradeinfo.com

HM Customs and Excise do not collect data on VAT from individual goods or services.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for

Transport what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [202412]

Charlotte Atkins: For details of the cost of ministerial travel, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 85–86W, by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The cost of taxis used by the Department in 2003 was £87,254.42, and in 2004 was £58,810.33. These figures refer to the central Department only, excluding the Agencies who do not record taxi costs separately. The information for the agencies could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

MOT

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the full rollout of the computerised MOT system began on 29 November 2004 as scheduled; what the projected date of completion of the rollout is; and if he will make a statement on *(a)* liability to penalties for delay to the rollout of the computerised MOT system incurred by Siemens Business Services (SBS) and *(b)* penalties issued to SBS by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency. [211087]

Mr. Jamieson: The MOT computerisation programme did not roll-out as scheduled on 29 November 2004. Following the first phase of trials at MOT stations, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and Siemens Business Services have agreed to make further changes to trials and roll-out plans before moving to the final phase of trials at MOT stations. Consequently, the new service will be trialled over a longer period (10 weeks) and installed at a larger number of sites (4,000) before moving to live running. VOSA has always made it clear that the system will only go live when it is satisfied that, in all respects, it will provide a robust and effective service. In this we have the garage trade's full support. The final phase of trials will start on 7 February 2005 and we expect the system to have been installed at all MOT garages by end October 2005.

Liability issues being discussed with Siemens Business Services are commercially confidential.

Railways

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will allow community rail partnerships to have powers to re-open dismantled railway lines and operate the railway; and if he will make a statement. [210678]

Mr. McNulty: I refer my hon. Friend to the response given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Charlotte Atkins) during the Adjournment Debate on the "Colne to Skipton Railway line" on 12 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 132WH.

Roads

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria he uses to determine whether a road has *(a)* national and *(b)* regional significance; [208215]

(2) whether *(a)* he and *(b)* Ministers in his Department have visited Hindhead to assess the proposals for the A3 Tunnel; and what factors led him to decide that the A3 between Portsmouth Harbour and London did not have national significance. [208217]

Mr. Jamieson: The Government's consultation paper—"Devolving Decision Making: A Consultation on Regional Funding Allocations"—set out our proposals to establish regional transport funding allocations. The consultation paper explained that funding decisions on routes of national and international significance would continue to be made on a national basis. To be regarded as such, a route has to satisfy all of the following criteria:

> To have average daily traffic flows, along the length of the route, of more than 60,000 vehicles
>
> To link at least two of the top 20 English cities by population; or link one of the top 20 cities with an airport/seaport or Wales/Scotland
>
> To carry heavy goods vehicle traffic equal to or in excess of 15 per cent. as a percentage of all traffic, as an average along the length of the route
>
> To be represented on the European Union's trans-European transport network

In some marginal cases we applied these criteria with a degree of flexibility. However, the A3 satisfies just one of the criteria: it provides a link between London and the port of Portsmouth. Consequently, for the purposes of future regional decision-making, the consultation paper proposes that it should be regarded as a route of regional significance.

The current ministerial team and I have not visited Hindhead, but we appreciate that improvement of the A3 at this site will deal with a significant bottleneck. We have attached high priority to developing a scheme that will resolve the traffic problems while keeping to a minimum the impact on an area that is environmentally sensitive.

Draft Orders for the A3 Hindhead tunnel scheme together with Notices of Intention to grant exchange land certificates published by ODPM/DEFRA, were first published in October 2003. Revised proposals for part of the scheme were subsequently published in May 2004 and are currently being considered at a public inquiry, which started on 7 September.

The public inquiry has concluded much of its anticipated business but adjourned on 15 December until 15 February 2005 in order that the Inspector can hear reaction to further minor proposals that were republished on 17 December.

It remains our intention to implement the scheme at Hindhead, subject to completion of the necessary statutory procedures including consideration of the Inspector's report and recommendations. However, in view of the cost of the scheme and available resources it has been necessary to programme it for implementation in the period beyond 2007–08.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209577]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport has only been in existence since May 2002.

The Department uses the most appropriate publication for recruitment advertising, be it national, regional, trade magazine or website, depending on the nature of the vacancy.

The following are details of the costs incurred by DfT (Central) for recruitment advertising below senior civil service, and the costs of advertising jobs at senior civil service level for all parts of DfT (i.e. including the Department's Executive Agencies).

	£
2002–03	241,868.87
2003–04	403,605.10

Advertising costs for recruitment below senior civil service in DfT's Executive Agencies are as follows:

	£
VOSA	
2002–03 (VI costs only)	326,503.00
2003–04	530,267.00
DVLA	
2002–03	179,497.09
2003–04	179,010.50
MCA	
2002–03	150,502.97
2003–04	218,251.07
HA	
2002–03	572,684.36
2003–04	471,313.26
VCA	
2002–03	20,632.00
2003–04	1,600.00
DSA	
2002–03	128,000.00
2003–04	502,000.00

Transport Pathfinders

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which local authorities have been selected as transport pathfinders; what the objectives are of such schemes; and what the costs are of implementing them. [211308]

Charlotte Atkins: 10 local authorities have been selected as transport pathfinders, these being the county councils for Devon, Durham, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Surrey and West Sussex, along with Halton and High Peak borough councils, Nottingham city council and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority.

The scheme's objectives are to develop and disseminate good practice and innovation related to the shared central/local government priorities for transport—improving public transport and access to jobs and services, while reducing congestion, pollution and road safety problems.

The project is a partnership between the selected local authorities, the Local Government Association and the Department for Transport. The DfT is contributing 100,000, primarily towards disseminating the lessons learnt by the pathfinders.

Uninsured Motorists

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's latest estimate is of the number of uninsured motorists driving on public roads; and what this figure is as a percentage of all drivers. [210142]

Mr. Jamieson: Estimates from the Insurance industry are that about 5 per cent. (approximately 1.25 million) motorists drive while uninsured.

I commissioned Professor David Greenaway of Nottingham University to carry out a review of motor insurance arrangements in the UK to see what could be done to tackle the problem. Publication of his report was on 11 August and we set up an implementation board in September to see that action follows.

Working jointly with the insurance industry we now plan to introduce legislation, improve procedures and design education, publicity and enforcement programmes to drive down uninsured driving.

These build on measures I announced last year to significantly tighten the vehicle registration and licensing system.

The first steps have already begun. Firstly the inclusion of a provision in the Road Safety Bill for improved Police access to the Motor Insurance Database; and secondly provision in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill of a power for the Police to seize vehicles being driven uninsured. Both will significantly improve the detection and enforcement capabilities of the police.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her Department's latest estimate is of the cost of the Common Agricultural Policy to the average family per week in grocery prices; and what the cost was in 1997. [204463]

Alun Michael: The consumer cost of the Common Agricultural Policy can be estimated by examining the difference between UK and world prices for agricultural food products. Our latest estimate for 2002 shows a cost of the CAP, to a notional family of four, due to higher food prices, of around £4.75 per week. Using the same methodology we estimate that the cost in 1997 would have been around £5.50.

Emissions Trading Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the capacity the present economic value attributed to permits under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme has to lead to environmentally beneficial changes of behaviour. [210850]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* Allocations at the EU level are estimated to be approximately 50 million tonnes of CO_2 below the projected emissions during phase 1, on the basis of the national allocation plans agreed by the Commission so far. The prevailing permit price in the market could be interpreted to represent the abatement cost to achieve this level of emission reductions.

For the UK, analysis by the DTI of the power station sector indicates that, during phase 1 of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (2005 to 2007) reductions of around $4MtCO_2$ per annum could be achieved at a carbon price of around €5 per tonne of CO_2. This price is lower than that which has recently prevailed in the market. It is possible however that there may be physical limitations on the amount of achievable savings in the near term.

It is possible that, in the longer term, emissions could be reduced by around $7MtCO_2$ per annum at a carbon price of €10 per tonne CO_2.

The analysis suggests that the modelled responsiveness is very sensitive to certain background assumptions, including the assumed gas to coal price differential, as well as the price of carbon itself.

A summary of the analysis was published in November 2004 as part of a DTI report on Updated Emissions Projections. Carbon price analysis can be found at annex 7 of the report.

The report is available electronically: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf.

External Suppliers

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tenders were let by her Department to external suppliers in the financial year 2003–04; and what the value was. [209100]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, and for the financial year 2003–04, the Department let 761 tenders to external suppliers with a financial value of £296 million.

Farm Payments

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from what budget she plans to make good the shortfall between the compensation for the foot and mouth outbreak requested from the EU and the amount received in order to make the necessary compensation payments to farmers. [208106]

Mr. Bradshaw: The control and eradication of foot and mouth disease in 2001 was paid for out of HM Treasury's reserve. The cost of lower than anticipated EU receipts will be borne by the Exchequer.

Flood Prevention

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her officials have undertaken into the preparation and implementation of the 2004 German flood protection legislation. [210852]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* My officials have not undertaken any direct research into the 2004 German Flood Control Act. However the Five-Point Programme, the framework upon which the legislation is based, adopts a similar approach to that taken in England on flood risk management. In particular:

Joint Federal Government/Länder flood defence programme.

This includes measures such as 'letting rivers spread out more' and controlling settlement development. In England we have recently consulted on a new strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management—'Making Space for Water', and have Planning Policy Guidance (PPG 25) to inform development decisions in flood risk areas.

Transnational Action Plans.

In particular this emphasises the need for flood defence measures to be progressed on a catchment area basis. Catchment Flood Management Plans are already well under way for the whole of England.

Progressing European co-operation.

The UK welcomes closer co-operation with Europe on such things as sharing information and best practice and undertaking joint research. Along with all member states, the UK adopted the European Flood Action Plan in 2004.

Immediate measures to improve flood defences.

The Five Point Programme includes a commitment to increase funding on flood defences, the appraisal of emergency planning arrangements and improved flood warning systems. Following the 2000 floods in England the Government increased funding significantly, from £310 million in 1996–97 up to a provision of £570 million in 2005–06; revised the Lead Department Plan on flooding and tested its effectiveness in June 2004 as part of Exercise Triton; and has recently approved the Environment Agency's new £226 million Flood Warning Strategy.

Growth Antibiotics

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to seek to ban the use of antibiotics where the object is to promote farm animal growth. [210846]

Mr. Bradshaw: Article 11.2 or Regulation (EC) 1831/2003 introduces a ban on the sale and use of antibiotic growth promoters from 1 January 2006.

Oil Contamination

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many oil-related pollution incidents have occurred in each year since 1995 that were caused by leakage or spillage *(a)* from domestic oil tanks and *(b)* on industrial, commercial, agricultural or institutional premises. [210633]

Mr. Morley: A table showing oil pollution incidents by premises type for the years 2001–03 is shown. Data for 2004 is not yet available and it is not possible to provide this breakdown for the period 1995–2000. However, overall figures for all oil pollution incidents show a significant decline since 2000 as follows:

	Number
1995	6,025
1996	5,587
1997	5,542
1998	5,308
1999	5,381
2000	6,215
2001	5,684
2002	5,217
2003	4,656

Incidents in 2001 and 2002 where pollutant is Oils and Fuels by premise type

	Total incidents		
Premises type	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Incidents that had an impact on water (either Cat 1, 2 or 3)			
Agriculture	81	141	107
Domestic and residential	184	311	231
Manufacturing	125	180	138
Other source	104	136	120
Power generation and supply	18	35	21
Premises type not identified	48	53	30
Public administration	15	21	24
Retail sector	78	88	80
Service sector	107	170	123
Transport	343	467	371
Waste management	18	43	38
Water industry	36	49	63
Total	1,157	1,694	1,346
Category 1 incidents to water			
Agriculture	0	2	0
Domestic and residential	0	2	3
Manufacturing	0	1	4
Other source	0	1	0
Power generation and supply	0	0	1
Not identified	1	0	0
Public administration	0	1	0
Retail sector	2	0	2
Service sector	0	4	1
Transport	0	2	3
Waste management	1	0	0
Water industry	0	1	4
Total	4	14	18
Category 2 incidents to water			
Agriculture	9	9	8
Domestic and residential	15	9	11
Manufacturing	12	14	7
Other source	5	10	6
Power generation and supply	0	2	1
Not identified	2	0	0
Public administration	4	2	6
Retail sector	9	3	7
Service sector	11	19	13
Transport	18	16	16
Waste management	0	4	3
Water industry	0	5	2
Total	85	93	80
Number of incidents where premises not known	1,489	1,879 (Cat 1 = 5, Cat 2 = 40)	1,743 (Cat 1 = 3, Cat 2 = 41)

PM Group plc

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Minister of State for the Environment and Agri-Environment has visited the Bradford-based manufacturing facility of PM Group plc. [211203]

Mr. Morley: In the answer given to the hon. Member on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1678W, I noted that I had accepted an invitation to visit the PM Group plc's manufacturing facility. Owing to other commitments, that visit has not taken place. Instead, I will be meeting shortly in London, with representatives of the group for a demonstration of their waste weighing systems.

Recycling

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* other stakeholders on how to encourage businesses to recycle their waste. [210089]

Mr. Morley: Ministers hold regular discussions with local authorities and other stakeholders on the whole range of waste issues, including the recycling of business waste.

For example I recently met the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Packaging (a group representing the packaging industry) and representatives from material organisations, trade associations, packaging compliance schemes and individual businesses.

Currently, the Government are consulting on new draft guidance for local authorities on the preparation of municipal waste management strategies. This guidance makes clear that local authorities, in their role as community leaders, may be able to encourage more sustainable management of waste in other sectors and should consider, in drafting their strategy, where there may be benefits from aligning municipal waste management services with the treatment of waste from other sectors.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department has taken to encourage the recycling of commercial waste. [210127]

Mr. Morley: The Government are taking a number of measures to encourage the recycling of commercial waste.

From 2005–06, landfill tax for active waste will increase by a minimum of £3 a tonne, to a medium to long-term rate of £35 per tonne. This will make recycling financially more attractive.

Additional revenue generated from the landfill tax will be redistributed to business through the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme to encourage and support resource efficiency, waste minimisation and diversion of waste away from landfill.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended) require producers to recover and recycle specified tonnages of packaging waste each year, so a significant amount of commercial waste is already being recycled to meet packaging targets.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) promotes resource efficiency, with a particular focus on creating stable and efficient markets for recycled materials and products and removing the barriers to waste minimisation, re-use and recycling.

The forthcoming batteries directive will require all types of waste batteries, including those in the commercial waste stream, to undergo a recycling process.

Slaughter

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received advocating compulsory pre-stunning before any type of religious slaughter. [209744]

Mr. Bradshaw: This is an issue in respect of which the Department regularly receives representations. Most recently, in response to consultation on the Government's draft response to the Farm Animal Welfare Council's report on the welfare of red meat animals at slaughter and killing, Defra received 26 responses advocating pre-stunning before all slaughter.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department gives to abattoirs concerning stunning prior to religious slaughter. [209745]

Mr. Bradshaw: The law permits animals to be slaughtered without stunning to provide food for certain religious communities. The Department does not provide specific advice to abattoirs. Guidance to Official Veterinary Surgeons (OVS) advises that, wherever possible, provision for stunning should be encouraged. This may be stunning before slaughter or an immediate post-cut stun. This guidance should be available to abattoirs through the OVS.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many animals slaughtered for *(a)* halal and *(b)* kosher meat were not stunned in the latest period for which figures are available. [209746]

Mr. Bradshaw: Information on the number of animals slaughtered for halal and kosher meat is not collected routinely. It has been gathered biennially by the Meat Hygiene Service on behalf of Defra, as part of the Animal Welfare Review.

The latest Animal Welfare Review was published in March 2004. The review reports on one week of slaughtering practices. In the period 1–7 September 2003, the following animals were slaughtered without stunning.

	Kosher	*Halal*
Cattle	726	—
Calves	16	—
Young lambs	1,704	5,141
Other sheep	—	11,454
Goats	—	62

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what condition each site of special scientific interest (SSSI) was in each year since 1997, broken down by local authority area; and what the total land areas of SSSIs was in each category *(a)* in England and *(b)* broken down by local authority area in each year. [208225]

Mr. Bradshaw: The condition of sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) is assessed not on a site-by-site basis but by each of the more than 22,000 management units into which they are divided. English Nature's first full condition assessment cycle was not completed until March 2003. The condition of SSSI land as recorded by the most recent assessments at that date and in March 2004 is shown as follows. A breakdown by local authority area is not available.

	Area (hectares)	
	March 2003	*March 2004*
Favourable	461,474.14	492,074.85
Unfavourable recovering	135,968.49	182,957.08
Unfavourable no change	270,977.20	246,120.35
Unfavourable declining	178,714.05	151,537.08
Part destroyed or destroyed	2,252.59	1,192.13
Total	1,049,386.47	1,073,881.49

Waste Collection (Charging Schemes)

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the work that her Department has undertaken on extending the powers of local authorities to allow the piloting of variable charging schemes for household waste collection and disposal as recommended by the Strategy Unit in the report Waste Not, Want Not. [211202]

Mr. Morley: The Department's work on variable household charging and household incentives for waste recycling and reduction is based on the body of existing, publicly available, research, supplemented by investigation into specific examples of such activity.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Census Records

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 632W, on census records, if he will seek *(a)* the advice of the National Archives, *(b)* a legal opinion and *(c)* the advice of the Advisory Council on Public Records and Archives on how the Freedom of Information Act 2000 relates to the closure or release of decennial population census returns for England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [210742]

Mr. Leslie: The Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into effect on 1 January 2005. The Act is still in the early days of implementation, and it is important that requests for access to information should be carefully considered on a case-by-case basis. I do not, therefore, intend to seek advice about its general operation in relation to decennial census returns at this time.

Data Protection (Loyalty Cards)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs if his Department will make an assessment of the data protection implications of the use made by supermarkets of data collected through loyalty cards. [211115]

Mr. Leslie: The use of personal data obtained by supermarkets in loyalty card schemes is subject to the regulatory framework set out in the Data Protection Act 1998. If any person believes that their data are being used in ways which infringe the framework, they can apply to the Information Commissioner for an assessment to be made of the circumstances.

Divorced/Separated Parents

Keith Vaz: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs what the reasons were for the decision not to make negotiation compulsory in disputes between divorced or separated parents. [210230]

Mr. Leslie: The Government published "Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities, Next Steps" on 18 January, which sets out plans to implement a range of measures to help separating parents in dispute about future parenting arrangements, reach agreement.

The Government's plans include improvements in the information available to parents and greater use of methods such as the Collaborative Law model, mediation, in-court conciliation and the Family Resolutions Pilot Project. The Government intend strongly to promote these methods as better ways to reach agreement than through contested court hearings. All publicly funded clients will have to show that they have considered mediation. Lawyers will not be funded by legal aid if out of court settlement is not reached under the collaborative law scheme. In addition, the Government, senior judiciary and Rules Committee plan to review court rules and practice directions so that the strongest possible encouragement is given to parties to participate in forms of dispute resolution.

We do not plan to make these schemes compulsory in every case, as an essential part of the process is that people come to them voluntarily and are therefore willing to participate. Further, in some cases, including those where domestic violence has been an issue, it would not always be appropriate to impose mediation on separating parents.

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Prime Minister what assessment he has made of preparations for the forthcoming elections in Iraq. [210906]

The Prime Minister: Both the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) and the UN remain confident that technical preparations are on schedule to meet the 30 January timing for elections. 111 groups, with over 7,000 candidates, are registered to contest the national elections. A further 12,000 candidates will contest the provincial elections.

Recent polling data indicates that the majority of Iraqis want to vote. Security for the elections will of course be vital. The IECI and the Iraqi authorities, with the multi-national forces, are working hard to ensure security in all areas to achieve the broadest possible participation.

To date, the IECI has accredited 12,400 Iraqi election observers to ensure that elections are free and fair. In addition, the International Mission for Iraqi Elections (IMIE), an initiative established by the Canadian Electoral Commission, will carry out a technical assessment of the elections.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with the *(a)* Iranian Government and *(b)* North Korean Government on nuclear weapons. [210698]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 26 January 2005]:* I discussed a range of issues with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi on 22 April 2004 including Iran's nuclear programme. I have had no contact with members of the North Korean Government.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he has taken to ensure that the standard assessment procedure for revised building standards accurately predicts carbon dioxide emissions; and if he will make a statement. [210887]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working with the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Department of Trade and Industry to ensure that the basis of the Standard Assessment Procedure and the data sets it calls for are as accurate as possible.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the compliance of house builders with the 2002 Building Regulations standards concerning energy efficiency. [211084]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned airtightness tests on 55 new dwellings built in compliance with the 2002 requirements and it subsequently received from The Energy Saving Partnership for Homes the results of a further 99 similar tests on other new dwellings. The results of these tests were unsatisfactory and reinforced more general concerns about compliance with the Building Regulations energy efficiency requirements. These influenced the proposals for further amendments published last July and the ongoing work on better guidance, dissemination and training for house builders and others.

Fire Service

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what amendments have been made to the guidance contained in the Fire Service Circular No. 3/1995 since its publication. [211031]

Mr. Raynsford: No amendments have been made to the Home Office "Guide To Fire Safety Planning And Management For Local Authority Fire Brigades", which accompanied Fire Service Circular No. 3/1995.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* fire certificates have been (i) issued and (ii) amended and *(b)* exemptions from requirement to hold a fire certificate have been granted under the terms and conditions of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 by each fire and rescue authority in England and Wales in each year since 1999; and how many applications for the (A) issue and (B) amendment of a fire certificate by each fire and rescue authority were outstanding on 31 December 2004. [211032]

Mr. Raynsford: The number of fire certificates issued under the terms and conditions of the Fire Precautions Act 1971 by each fire and rescue authority in England and Wales in each year since 1999 are tabled as follows:

Number of Fire Precautions Act certificates issued in 1999–2000 to 2003–04

Fire and Rescue Service	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon	48	38	78	40	13
Bedfordshire and Luton	20	31	27	16	7
Buckinghamshire	101	76	66	52	38
Cambridgeshire	78	51	43	46	30
Cheshire	60	43	46	37	30
Cleveland	65	29	17	18	8
Cornwall	59	35	19	37	44
County Durham and Darlington	23	25	15	24	3
Cumbria	36	26	31	30	39
Derbyshire	75	52	33	36	24
Devon	108	128	71	49	66
Dorset	76	70	52	73	44
East Sussex	28	26	28	22	29
Essex	77	135	139	113	125
Gloucestershire	140	137	177	130	99
Greater Manchester	187	129	149	115	113
Hampshire	50	51	64	118	61
Hereford and Worcester	61	29	51	25	27
Hertfordshire	59	28	46	80	53
Humberside	103	70	59	62	46
Isle of Wight	15	9	2	3	6
Isles of Scilly	1	0	0	2	1
Kent	107	84	76	67	39
Lancashire	93	58	81	38	39
Leicestershire	50	32	23	13	19
Lincolnshire	15	12	21	5	18
London	602	463	418	300	272
Merseyside	54	70	86	26	34
Mid and West Wales	99	85	55	55	31
Norfolk	31	37	38	25	23
North Wales	44	74	29	22	11
North Yorkshire	75	38	43	54	29
Northamptonshire	14	20	25	19	15
Northumberland	10	8	5	6	0
Nottinghamshire	74	43	26	25	23
Oxfordshire	87	50	28	29	22
Royal Berkshire	48	56	62	52	72
Shropshire	18	18	25	17	9
Somerset	27	21	54	29	12
South Wales	89	84	57	64	41
South Yorkshire	50	41	73	71	53
Staffordshire	89	78	51	41	24
Suffolk	14	30	14	9	29
Surrey	73	104	94	26	41
Tyne and Wear	67	51	59	46	57
Warwickshire	33	24	36	28	19
West Midlands	107	87	72	80	11
West Sussex	79	52	81	58	29
West Yorkshire	124	110	72	55	50
Wiltshire	37	24	41	31	19
Total	3,680	3,072	2,958	2,419	1,947

Records are not kept of either amended fire certificates issued or outstanding applications for amended certificates. Any amended certificates issued are counted in with fire certificates issued. In respect of outstanding applications for amended certificates, there is no statutory requirement for owners/occupiers of certificated premises to apply for amended certificates. Section 8 of the Fire Precautions Act requires the owner/occupier to inform the fire authority of any material structural changes to the building. The fire authority then has a duty, if satisfied with the proposals, either to amend the fire certificate or issue a new one. If not satisfied, the fire authority must issue a notice of steps to be taken before amending or issuing a new fire certificate.

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004 to come into force; and what guidance he has given to fire and rescue authorities regarding the proper discharge of their statutory duties to enforce the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Workplace) Regulations 1997 in the interim period before the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2004 comes into force. [211033]

Mr. Raynsford: The decision on an appropriate date for the coming into force of the proposed Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order has not yet been taken.

The suite of guidance contained in Fire Precautions Act circulars stands good for the interim period. Supplementary advice on handling of applications for fire certificates has been issued, by the Chief Fire Officer's Association.

Five-year Plan

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish his Department's five-year plan. [210634]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, published on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 22–40, the Government's five-year housing plan "Sustainable Communities: Homes for All".

Next week my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will also publish a partner five-year plan "Sustainable Communities: People, Places and Prosperity".

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207827]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie), on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Licensing Act

Ross Cranston: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on local authority street cleaning costs; what representations his Department has received on the subject; and whether new money will be provided to meet additional costs for local street cleaning services resulting from the implementation of the Act. [210687]

Mr. Raynsford: In response to concerns raised by a number of local authorities, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister undertook an assessment of the potential knock on effects of the then Licensing Bill, including additional street cleansing costs, in 2003. Despite consulting 18 local authorities, the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government, it proved impossible to produce robust evidence of any additional street cleansing costs. The available evidence was inconclusive on whether there would be an overall cost to local government. We continue to examine and monitor the situation.

During the recent discussions about the 2005–06 Local Government Finance Settlement, of the 233 representations received from local authorities, 21 made some reference to the impact of the Licensing Act. Representations about the costs to local authorities of the Licensing Act were also made during the Department of Media Culture and Sports consultation on licensing fees.

Funding for street cleaning is provided through the local government finance settlement. Total support from Government grant and business rates in 2005–06 will be £60.1 billion. That is £3.5 billion, or 6.3 per cent., more than in 2004–05. We believe that this substantial investment in local government and the scope for efficiency gains addresses the pressures faced by local government. There is no excuse for excessive increases in council tax.

Local Education Authorities

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the best value performance indicators (BVPIs) for each local education authority for 2003–04 will be published on the BVPI website. [211306]

Mr. Raynsford: The best value performance indicators (BVPIs) results for each local education authority for 2003–04 will be published on the BVPI website in early February.

New Charter

Andrew Bennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of whether New Charter is providing an adequate service as agents for homeless people for Tameside Council. [210664]

Yvette Cooper: New Charter is providing services for homeless people as agents for Tameside Council, who are responsible for monitoring the contract. I understand that the Council is satisfied that all the main aspects of the service specification are being achieved.

Social Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from *(a)* registered social landlords and *(b)* those who fund them for greater freedom to raise rents. [210645]

Keith Hill: In response to its three-year review of rent restructuring the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received a number of representations from registered social landlords and others such as the National Housing Federation. A summary of responses will be made available shortly.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many tenants in each local authority area have exercised their right to buy in each of the last three years; what revenue has thereby accrued to each local authority; and what proportion of the total in each year was used for *(a)* repairing and *(b)* building council housing. [210755]

Keith Hill: Annual figures for council right to buy activity for 1999–2000 to 2002–03 by local authority are available from the Housing Statistics section on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's internet site. These tables show the number of right to buy sales and the average selling price excluding discount for each reporting local authority.

It is a matter for individual authorities to decide how to use the receipts they retain from right to buy sales in the light of local needs and priorities. Information on how local authorities chose to use the retained receipts from right to buy sales is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The web link for 1999–2000 to 2001–02 information on Right to Buy activity is: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentsservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=1680&l=4 [Housing—Housing Statistics—Publications—Local Housing Statistics—Annual Statistics]

The web link for 2002–03 information is: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_029535.xls [Housing—Housing Statistics—Live Tables—Social Housing Sales—Table number 648]

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Documents

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of *(a)* drafting, *(b)* publishing and *(c)* circulating (i) Working together—tackling not tolerating antisocial behaviour, (ii) One Year On—together tackling anti-social behaviour and (iii) central Government funding of voluntary and community organisations. [201038]

Ms Blears: Officials from the Government's Antisocial Behaviour Unit drafted the two "Together" reports published on 28 October 2004 as part of their daily duties. An estimate of £59,499 has been made for the drafting, publication and circulation for both reports.

The One Year On and Practitioners' reports have been distributed widely to key stakeholder groups and individuals throughout England and Wales. They were initially distributed at the One Year On event held on 28 October to an audience in excess of 600 people drawn from local authorities, community groups, members of the public, police, MPs, and antisocial behaviour practitioners. Since this time the reports have also been available online and downloadable from the website and have received over 1,270 individual hits.

Distribution to 6,000 individuals and groups from the range of key stakeholder groups including CDRP chairs, ASB Co-ordinators, Action Areas and Trailblazer representatives, and Together Academy attendees has also occurred along with individual mailouts upon request.

Asylum Seekers

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what target time has been set for reaching an initial decision on *(a)* asylum and *(b)* non-asylum applications; and what percentage of cases were processed within these target periods in the last period for which figures are available. [206248]

Mr. Browne: The information is as follows:

(a) The Home Office's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for 2003–04 was to ensure that 75 per cent. of new substantive asylum applications (excluding withdrawals and 3rd country cases) were decided within two months. This was an increase from the 65 per cent. and 60 per cent. targets met in 2002–03 and 2001–02 respectively.

The 2003–04 target was exceeded, with 82 per cent. of new substantive applications having an initial decision reached and served within two months. The speed of initial decisions continues to improve with 84 per cent. of substantive applications received in Q2 (April to June) 2004 having an initial decision reached and served within two months, and reflects the Governments commitment to, and continued success in, speeding up the initial decision-making process.

Information on the number of asylum applications outstanding, and the timeliness of initial decisions are published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

(b) The internal target times for processing non-asylum applications have been revised in the light of the top to bottom review of managed migration routes announced on 27 April 2004.

The internal targets that have been set are for the whole period from 1 October 2004 to 31 March 2005 and are summarised in the table. The table includes provisional management information currently available on performance so far against those targets.

Application Type	*Target from 1 October 2004*	*Provisional management information on performance for October-November 2004*
Charged general leave to remain (postal)	70 per cent. in 3 weeks 85 per cent. in 13 weeks	68 per cent. in 3 weeks 85 per cent. in 13 weeks
Charged general leave to remain (Public Enquiry Office)	98 per cent. in 24 hours	85 per cent. in 24 hours
Non-charged general leave to remain (postal)	20 per cent. 3 weeks 25 per cent. in 13 weeks	37 per cent. in 3 weeks 52 per cent. in 13 weeks
Non-charged general leave to remain (Public Enquiry Office)	95 per cent. in 24 hours	97 per cent. in 24 hours
Work permit, including sector based scheme	70 per cent. in 1 week 90 per cent. in 3 weeks	66 per cent. in 1 week 84 per cent. in 3 weeks
Charged leave to remain (postal) for immigration employment document	70 per cent. in 3 weeks 90 per cent. in 8 weeks	35 per cent. 3 weeks 82 per cent. 8 weeks
Highly skilled migrant programme	50 per cent. in 4 weeks 90 per cent. in 13 weeks	25 per cent. in 4 weeks 38 per cent. in 13 weeks
Worker registration scheme	70 per cent. in 1 week 90 per cent. in 3 weeks	40 per cent. in 1 week 91 per cent. in 3 weeks
Nationality	50 per cent. in 13 weeks	48 per cent. in 13 weeks

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of Zimbabwean asylum seekers received *(a)* refugee status and *(b)* another form of protection from the UK Government in each quarter since 1997. [210513]

Mr. Browne: The tables show initial decision and appeal determinations by quarter, where available, for Zimbabwean asylum applicants, 1997 to Q3 2004. Decisions do not necessarily relate to applications made in the same period and appeal outcomes do not necessarily relate to initial decisions made in the same period.

Information on asylum applications is published quarterly. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 will be available on 22 February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Initial decisions[1] on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004, Nationals of Zimbabwe

		Cases considered under normal procedures[2]						*Backlog clearance exercise*				
	Total initial decisions	*Grants of asylum*		*Grants of ELR, HP and DL[3]*		*Total refusals*		*Total backlog clearance exercise*	*Backlog clearance ELR[4, 5]*		*Backlog clearance refusals[4, 6]*	
		No.	*%*	*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*		*No.*	*%*	*No.*	*%*
Q1 1997	25	—	0		0	25	100		—	—	—	—
Q2 1997	30	•	4	•	4	25	93		—	—	—	—
Q3 1997	50	•	2	5	6	50	92	—	—		—	—
Q4 1997	20	—	0	—	0	20	100	—	—	—	—	—
Q1 1998	15	—	0	•	13	15	88		—	—	—	—
Q2 1998	10		0	•	10	10	90	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 1998	5	—	0	—	0	5	100	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 1998	15	—	0		0	15	100	—	—	—	—	—
1999[7]	105	—	0		0	105	91	10	10	90	•	10
Q1 2000	35	•	4		0	35	73	10	10	100	—	0
Q2 2000	60	5	4	5	6	50	59	25	25	93	•	7
Q3 2000	155	5	3	5	4	145	90	5	•	25	5	75
Q4 2000	305	10	3	—	0	295	97		—	—	—	—
Q1 2001	590	15	3	10	2	565	96		—	—	—	—
Q2 2001	440	25	5	10	3	405	92		—	—	—	—
Q3 2001	435	35	8	10	2	395	90	—	—	—	—	—
Q4 2001	665	45	7	15	2	605	91		—	—	—	—
Q1 2002	1,015	200	20	30	3	785	77		—	—	—	—
Q2 2002	1,305	440	34	25	2	840	64		—	—	—	—
Q3 2002	1,580	715	45	20	1	845	53		—	—	—	—
Q4 2002	2,330	885	38	30	1	1,415	61		—	—	—	—
Q1 2003[8]	1,190	350	29	10	1	835	70		—	—	—	—
Q2 2003[8]	1,145	275	24	10	1	860	75		—	—	—	—
Q3 2003[8]	905	135	15	10	1	760	84		—	—	—	—
Q4 2003[8]	950	115	12	5	0	830	87		—	—	—	—

Initial decisions[1] on asylum applications, by quarter, 1997 to Q3 2004: Nationals of Zimbabwe

	Cases considered under normal procedures[2]							Backlog clearance exercise				
	Total initial decisions	Grants of asylum		Grants of ELR, HP and DL[3]		Total refusals		Total backlog clearance exercise	Backlog clearance ELR[4, 5]		Backlog clearance, refusals[4, 6]	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%
Q1 2004[8]	845	90	11	10	1	740	88	—	—	—	—	—
Q2 2004[8]	550	55	10	5	1	490	89	—	—	—	—	—
Q3 2004[8]	630	45	7	10	2	575	91	—	—	—	—	—

n/a = not applicable.

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5, with * = 1 or 2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

[3] Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave replaced exceptional leave to remain from 1 April 2003.

[4] Cases decided under pragmatic measures aimed at reducing the pre '96 act asylum backlog.

[5] May include a small number of cases where asylum has been granted.

[6] May include a small number of cases where the application has been refused on substantive grounds.

[7] Annual data only available.

[8] Provisional figures.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice his Department provides to its asylum officials regarding the grounds for granting refugee status to applicants who have fled persecution because of their homosexuality. [210708]

Mr. Browne: All caseworkers in the immigration and nationality directorate, who are responsible for considering asylum claims, are trained in the proper application of the 1951 UN convention relating to the status of refugees and the need to apply those principles to the circumstances of the particular case. All caseworkers have access to the Home Office asylum policy instructions, which are published on the Home Office website. Additional support is provided by senior caseworkers, who are on hand to give advice and to ensure that consistently high standards of decision making are maintained.

Mrs. Roche: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what training in sexuality issues his Department provides to officials who handle asylum applications based on persecution on the grounds of sexual orientation. [210709]

Mr. Browne: Asylum caseworkers undergo extensive training in the assessment of asylum claims made under the 1951 convention relating to the status of refugees. This includes training in the interpretation of the five convention reasons, and specifically the definition of "membership of a particular social group", which is relevant to many claims involving sexual orientation. Guidance on "Membership of a Particular Social Group" and instructions on "Assessing the Claim" are available to caseworkers in the form of the asylum policy instructions, which are published on the Home Office website.

Class A Drug Arrests

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will estimate the proportion of crime in Hartlepool linked to the need to support a Class A drug habit. [210643]

Caroline Flint: Recorded crime figures, which are used to measure the extent of crime in local areas, include statistics on drugs offences, such as possession, and on property crimes, such as burglary, but do not contain information on the offender's drug habits. It is therefore not possible to estimate the proportion of all crime in Hartlepool which is linked to the need to support a drug habit.

However, since April 2004 offenders in Hartlepool charged with certain trigger offences known to be commonly committed by drug users have been tested for opiates and cocaine/crack as part of the Drug Interventions Programme. Between April and December 2004 a total of 588 offenders were tested and just over half (55 per cent.) of them tested positive for opiates or cocaine/crack. This gives some indication of the proportion of property crime that may be linked to drug use, although it should be noted that not all crime by drug users is necessarily committed to support their habit.

Conditional Cautions

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many conditional cautions have been issued to first-time offenders in *(a)* Hartlepool and *(b)* other drugs intervention programme areas since the programme was introduced. [210644]

Caroline Flint: There are eight early implementation areas for Conditional Cautioning. Two areas are currently operational (Lancashire and Redditch). Four conditional cautions have been issued, three of which were issued to first time offenders.

Hartlepool is not within an early implementation area for Conditional Cautioning, so no conditional cautions can be issued in Hartlepool.

The Drug Interventions Programme "intensive" Early Implementation Areas for Conditional Cautioning which are aimed at drug misusing offenders, will become operational late January to March 2005. They do not include Hartlepool.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letter dated 20 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Veronica Whitehead. [210835]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 21 January 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letter dated 8 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Nusrat Bibi. [210839]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 7 January 2005.

Cycling Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions for *(a)* dangerous and *(b)* careless or inconsiderate cycling (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [209808]

Caroline Flint: The information contained in the table gives the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty at all courts for "dangerous cycling" and "cycling without due care and attention" in the Essex police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area, 1997 to 2003.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for certain cycling offences, 1997 to 2003[1]

	Dangerous cycling[2]		*Cycling without due care and attention*[3]	
	Proceeded against	*Found guilty*[4]	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*[4]
Essex police force area				
1997	2	1	2	2
1998	5	4	6	4
1999	1	1	3	3
2000	1	1	2	2
2001	1	—	—	—
2002	—	—	—	—
2003	—	—	6	3
Of which				
South East Essex petty sessional area[5]				
1997	—	—	—	—
1998	2	2	3	2
1999	—	—	1	1
2000	—	—	—	—
2001	—	—	—	—
2002	—	—	—	—
2003	—	—	3	2

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Road Traffic Act 1988, sec. 28.

[3] Road Traffic Act 1988, sec. 29.

[4] For South East Essex PSA the guilty figures include those found guilty at the Crown court where South East Essex PSA was the committing court.

[5] Covers Southend and includes some parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Dartmoor Prison

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library copies of contracts or agreements relating to the provision of offending behaviour courses by faith-based organisations at Dartmoor Prison. [206879]

Paul Goggins: The only faith-based offending related course under development at Dartmoor prison is the Innerchange Freedom Initiative (IFI). The course is expected to start in February 2005. The IFI project leader has just completed a quality assurance document with the prison's Head of Resettlement to submit to the Area Manager for approval under Prison Service Order 4350 on Effective Regime Interventions. There is also an agreement that is currently being negotiated which is now in its final draft. As and when approval has been given and the documents finalised they will be placed in the House Library.

Extradition

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which countries the UK does not require to provide prima facie evidence before complying with a request to extradite an individual. [210482]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom does not require the provision of prima facie evidence, in support of an extradition request, from the following countries: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Moldova, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and the United States of America.

Identity Cards Programme

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the *(a)* conferences, *(b)* seminars and *(c)* meetings with private sector representatives attended by members of the Identity Cards Programme team in the last six months. [208287]

Mr. Browne: In the last six months, members of the Identity Cards Programme team have:

(a) Attended the following conferences

Biometrics 2004
CIFAS Executive Forum
e-Government Exchange
e-Government Summit
National Fraud Forum
Risk and Security Management
UK and Ireland Fraud Liaison Group Annual Conference
Whitehall Industry Group Fraud Solutions Workshops;

and conferences organised by:

Experian
The Financial Services Authority
Institute for Public Policy Research
Institution of Electrical Engineers
International Association for Biometrics
Royal United Services Institute
Telecommunications Users' Fraud Forum;

(b) Participated in the following seminars

BT Syntegra Consultation Event
Naked Science: The State of Identity (Science Museum/Dana Centre);

and four seminars organised by Intellect the trade body for the UK based information technology, telecommunications and electronics industry.

(c) Held meetings with the following private sector organisations:

ABTA
Airline Operators Association
APACS
Atmel
Atos Origin
Authentec
Aware
Axon
BAA
BAR-UK
BATA
Bioscrypt
British Bankers' Association
BT
Callcredit
Cap Gemini
CBI
Cherry Corporation
CIFAS
Cogent
Consult Hyperion
CoreStreet
Datacard
De La Rue
Director of Foundation for Science and Technology
EDS
Equifax
Eye Ticket Corporation
Experian
Finance and Leasing Association
The Football Association
Fujitsu Microelectronics
Generics Group
Giesecke and Devrient
Hewlett Packard
Idenix
IFTO
Infineon
Intellect
Indian
Lasercard
London City Airport
NERA Consulting
Oberthur
OCE
ORGA
OVD Kinegram
Passenger Shipping Association
Precise Biometrics
Premier Electronics
Prudential
Royal Bank of Scotland
Setec
Sharp Corporation
SMARTRAC
St Microelectronics
Visa Europe

Meetings have also been held with

Small Business Service
Inland Revenue MPPC Payroll Group
Financial Services Authority

where private sector organisations have been in attendance.

For the purposes of this answer, the following definitions have been used. "Conference" means an event organised by an external organisation where a member of the Programme Team has been invited to participate or attend. "Seminar" means an event which was arranged by the Programme or by an external organisation where identity cards was the only or principal item of discussion. "Meeting" means any other meeting which involved a private organisation, where identity cards were the primary subject. Meetings with organisations which are currently providing services to the Programme team or with organisations which at the time were bidding to provide services to the Programme Team have been excluded.

Identity Cards and Passports (Forgery)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals deported from this country have been found to be in possession of forged identity cards in the last 12 months. [207328]

Mr. Browne: We do not record centrally whether individuals removed or deported from the UK possessed forged identity cards on arrival or when detected.

The total number of individuals in the UK found to be in possession of forged identity documents in the 12 months leading up to the end of November 2004, is approximately 10,700, of whom approximately 1,600 were in possession of forged European identity cards. These statistics are based on internal management information, as such information is not published routinely within the official statistics.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals with forged passports have been arrested or detained in the last three years by *(a)* Customs and Immigration officers and *(b)* the police. [207485]

Mr. Browne: The border agencies take the abuse of travel documents seriously and pursue prosecutions whenever possible.

Individuals who provide forged documents can be arrested and detained either by the UK Immigration Service or the police.

Unfortunately the collation of the recorded crime statistics means that it is not possible to separately identify these specific offences which are recorded together with other forgery offences.

Locally collated management information indicates that 215 people were arrested at Heathrow and Gatwick in 2004 for forgery and counterfeiting offences.

Immigration

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department under what circumstances would individuals, who are not British citizens, who have received custodial sentences for crimes committed in the UK, not be deported; and if he will make a statement. [208943]

Mr. Browne: Each case is decided on its individual merits. Where there has been a recommendation by the Court for deportation, there is a presumption that, save in the most exceptional circumstances, the recommendation will be enforced. All cases, including those whose deportation is considered to be conducive to the public good, are considered under the provisions of paragraph 364 of HC 395 "Statement of Changes in Immigration Rules". This includes age, length of residence and strength of connections in the United Kingdom, personal history, domestic circumstances, previous criminal record, compassionate circumstances and any representations received. Should any one or a combination of these factors outweigh the public interest, deportation would not proceed.

Justice and Home Affairs Council

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's priorities for the Justice and Home Affairs Council during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union will be; and if he will make a statement. [209560]

Caroline Flint: During 2005 the UK will work closely with Luxembourg as current Presidency and with Austria and Finland (whose Presidencies follow ours) to take forward the inherited agenda and handle any new proposals that may be introduced by the Commission or Member States in the JHA Council. Work will continue on the implementation and evaluation of the Tampere agenda, and begin on the new multi-annual work programme (the "Hague Programme") which will take forward the development of an area of freedom, security and justice. In line with the Hague Programme, priority will also be given to developing a coherent external dimension of this work through enhanced cooperation with third countries, groups of countries and regions. The Council is expected to receive proposals on the instruments for Freedom, Security and Justice in the context of the Financial Perspective 2007–2013.

A copy of the "UK—Luxembourg Operational Programme" (AOP), with details on JHA priorities during 2005 can be found in the Library of the House.

We will work to deliver on the commitments contained in the Action plan on Combating Terrorism, and on the new EU Action Plan on Drugs for the period 2005–2007 (likely to be adopted during the Luxembourg Presidency). We will also continue to develop judicial co-operation in both criminal and civil areas.

On asylum and immigration, key priorities include strengthening the external border; improving the security of travel documents, including the incorporation of biometricidentifiers; improving the EU's performance on readmission agreements; helping countries or origin and transit improve their capacity for migration and refugee protection; and developing best practice in the area of integration.

On law enforcement, key priorities will be to maximise practical, operationally focused criminal intelligence exchange between Member States, including through Europol, and to step up the co-ordination of investigation and prosecution by Member States of serious crime, making best use of Eurojust. The Council will also focus its work on further measures to be taken in the implementation of the EU Millennium Strategy to combat organised crime, and the fight against organised crime in general.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the blueprint for the National Offender Management Service was approved by the National Offender Management Service Board before it was presented to the Prime Minister on 18 November. [209386]

Paul Goggins: The proposals for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and how they would lead to a reduction in re-offending was agreed across Government, including with the Prime Minister.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what target his Department sets for the maximum acceptable time to respond in full to a parliamentary question; and what percentage of answers given by his Department failed to meet this target in each parliamentary session from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [202563]

Fiona Mactaggart: Departments aim to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but this Department makes every effort to achieve these timescales.

The Home Office does not maintain historic records in a way that enables it to provide all the information in the format requested. The Department has recently introduced a new PQ system, the electronic parliamentary Questions System (ePQS) to better monitor and manage the Department's performance.

Figures obtained from the Home Office Annual reports show that the number of questions answered that failed to meet Departmental targets were 54 per cent. in 2000–01, 61 per cent. in 2001–02 and 63 per cent. in 2002–03. Figures prior to this are not available.

Passports

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what forms passport applicants receive in application packs as part of the UK Passport Service's Personal Identification Project; and what forms applicants are required to complete as part of their application. [209447]

Mr. Browne: A copy of the forms were dispatched to the right hon. Member on 19 January. Two forms are issued as part of the Personal Identification Project (PIP) the main standard form and the PIP discretionary supplementary form.

Police Equipment (Tetra)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is his Department's policy to use the precautionary principle with reference to the use of Tetra-based equipment by police officers; and if he will make a statement. [210269]

Caroline Flint: No hazard to health associated with the use of Tetra- based equipment has been identified. However, as recommended by the 2000 Stewart Report (Mobile Phones and Health,), we have taken a precautionary approach to the use of Tetra technology. A report by independent experts was commissioned, and we have taken forward their recommendations. We have stipulated that low power equipment is used. We have also put in place a comprehensive programme of research as part of our continuing commitment to providing the police service with a modern communication system that is safe, secure, efficient and effective.

Prisoners (Sexual Harassment)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are in place in prisons in England and Wales to protect prisoners from sexual harassment; and if he will make a statement. [209928]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has a range of policies designed to promote a prison environment in which prisoners feel safe.

The Prison Service's Violence Reduction Strategy was launched in May 2004 and requires that each establishment has in place a local violence reduction strategy appropriate to needs. The Prison Service's definition of violence is: "any incident where a person is abused, threatened or assaulted. This includes any explicit or implicit challenge to their safety where the resulting harm may be physical, emotional or psychological." This covers all forms of harassment.

An intranet toolkit is helping establishments to develop practical solutions, including environmental and physical measures as well as alternatives for behaviour management. A whole prison approach is encouraged, with the aim of reducing violence and fear of violence. A focus on personal safety, supporting victims, and repairing the physical and emotional harm caused by violence or abuse, links closely with the suicide prevention strategy.

Prisoners also have access to a comprehensive complaint system.

Following any complaint, including harassment, the Governor is required to investigate the complaint fully and take any necessary and appropriate action in order to safeguard the prisoner in his/her care.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what overspend of the Prison Service budget for 2004–05 was forecast on 7 December 2004. [210940]

Paul Goggins: The overspend forecast on 7 December 2004 was £31.1 million, which related to the forecast outturn as shown in the management accounts up to the end of October 2004. We expect the final outturn for the financial year to be within the delegated budget.

Probation

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation areas in England and Wales exceeded their targets for victim contact during *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* the first six months of 2004–05. [203827]

Paul Goggins: The performance of probation areas in meeting their targets for victims contacted in 2003–04 and April to June 2004 (the latest available figures) is set out in the following table. In the first quarter of 2004–05, 39 of the 42 areas met or exceeded their target and only one area was more than 5 per cent. short of the target. In 2003–04, 38 areas met or exceeded the target with three areas falling more than 5 per cent. short.

Percentage of victims contacted in accordance with national standards—target = 85 per cent.

Percentage

Region/area	*2003–04*	*Q1, 2004–05*
West Midlands		
Staffordshire	98	95
Warwickshire	87	96
West Mercia	83	77
West Midlands	96	86
West Midlands total	94	90
North East		
Northumbria	98	97
Teesside	98	91
County Durham	99	100
North East total	98	96
East		
Bedfordshire	92	90
Cambridgeshire	94	98
Essex	91	93
Hertfordshire	93	93
Norfolk	68	91
Suffolk	88	95
East total	88	93
North West		
Cheshire	94	97
Cumbria	90	100
Lancashire	93	81
Merseyside	97	98
Greater Manchester	90	95
North West total	92	94
East Midlands		
Derbyshire	96	92
Leicestershire and Rutland	100	100
Lincolnshire	95	83
Northamptonshire	98	96
Nottinghamshire	98	97
East Midlands total	97	96
Yorkshire and Humberside		
Humberside	94	93
North Yorkshire	97	87
South Yorkshire	89	100
West Yorkshire	95	99
Yorkshire and Humberside total	93	97

Percentage of victims contacted in accordance with national standards—target = 85 per cent.

Region/area	2003–04	Percentage Q1, 2004–05
South East		
Hampshire	90	95
Kent	74	95
Surrey	95	100
Sussex	93	99
Thames Valley	95	96
South East total	89	97
South West		
Avon and Somerset	94	98
Dorset	100	100
Gloucestershire	86	89
Wiltshire	98	100
Devon/Cornwall	97	98
South West total	95	98
London		
London total	77	85
Wales		
Gwent	99	97
North Wales	95	97
South Wales	93	99
Dyfed/Powys	100	100
Wales total	95	98
England and Wales total	91	93

The National Standard for victim contact work is that probation areas should offer face-to-face contact between the victim (or family) and a member of the probation service (or agent) within eight weeks of the offender being sentenced. The NPS target is to make initial contact within that time scale in 85 per cent. of all eligible cases. This was exceeded in 2003–04 and performance continues to improve in 2004–05 with 93 per cent. of victims contacted in accordance with the national standard. Due to the eight-week wait to record the data, data for 2004–05 cover just the first quarter, ie, April to June 2004.

There has been good, steady improvement in performance since April 2001.

Period covered	Number of named victims	Number of victims contacted	Percentage of victims contacted
April 2001 to March 2002	15,041	9,523	63
April 2002 to March 2003	15,904	12,949	81
April 2003 to March 2004	15,647	14,276	91
April 2004 to June 2004	3,909	3,604	93

Religious Hatred Legislation

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what views have been advanced in representations which he has received from religious groups *(a)* supporting and *(b)* opposing the adoption of a law on incitement of religious hatred. [210409]

Fiona Mactaggart: A joint statement issued in April 2004 by representatives of many important faith communities in Britain urged the Government to legislate against incitement to religious hatred as soon as possible. An updated version of this statement with additional signatories was issued in January 2005. The statement reaffirms the belief of the bodies represented that the measure is necessary to remedy an unjust and anomalous gap in the present law whereby racial groups are protected from incited hatred whereas religious groups are not.

The Home Office has received representations from a number of religious groups who have concerns about aspects of the proposed measure. These concerns have focused around the extent to which the legislation might in certain circumstances inhibit the freedom to worship and to proselytise. There have also been concerns expressed by groups such as humanists and secularists that the law would not catch incited hatred against groups holding non-religious beliefs. The Home Office has met representatives of these groups and will continue to work to allay their concerns.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of laws concerning the incitement of religious hatred in other countries. [210465]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information published by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance indicates that countries with legislation of this kind include Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France Germany, Greece and Italy. The state of Victoria in Australia also has legislation on this subject. The details of legislation vary, as one would expect. For example, the offence in Victoria has a lower threshold and wider scope than the Government are proposing for this country.

As regards effectiveness, while it is useful to look for similar provisions in other jurisdictions, we share the view of the House of Lords Select Committee which in its Report on Religious Offences in England and Wales (April 2003) concluded that "Whilst it is possible to describe the offences that exist in different jurisdictions with some accuracy assessing their efficacy is much more difficult.'

Right of Establishment in Business

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for the right of establishment in business under EU association agreements were received by his Department between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004, broken down by nationality of the applicant; and how many were *(a)* granted, *(b)* granted in error, *(c)* refused, *(d)* refused in error, *(e)* withdrawn and *(f)* otherwise disposed of, broken down by nationality. [207534]

Mr. Browne: Between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004 there were 31,812 applications for the right of establishment in business under EC Association Agreements received by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND). The table shows this total figure broken down by nationality and by the outcome of the case.

There is no facility on the General Casework Information Database to record applications granted or refused in error.

Nationality of applicant	*Total received 1 June 2003 to 30 April 2004*	*Granted*	*Refused*	*Withdrawn by applicant*	*Other*[1]
Bulgaria	4,999	4,070	252	100	23
Czech Republic	238	197	4	31	0
Estonia	244	197	9	31	1
Hungary	142	113	3	24	2
Latvia	1,262	963	98	169	4
Lithuania	7,268	5,280	253	944	30
Poland	13,278	10,015	731	2,362	47
Romania	3,299	2,632	294	49	11
Slovakia	369	319	11	37	1
Slovenia	3	3	0	0	0
Turkey	710	440	69	18	5
Totals	31,812	24,229	1,724	3,765	2,094

[1] Category of "other" includes all outcomes possible on the General Casework Information Database apart from granted, refused and withdrawn by applicant. This includes applications received in the specified period against which no outcome is yet recorded, and applications received in the specified period against which an outcome was recorded after 30 September 2004. Due to limitations of the Management Information System it is not possible to break down these particular cases by nationality.

Note:

1 Numbers of applications granted, refused, withdrawn by applicant or "other" relate only to applications received by IND between 01 June 2003 and 30 April 2004.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down the number of applications between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004 for the right of establishment in business under EU Association Agreements refused by grounds for refusal and nationality. [207537]

Mr. Browne: Between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004 there were 1,159 applications for the right of establishment in business under EC Association Agreements refused by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. The table shows this total figure broken down by nationality of the applicant.

There is no facility on the Management Information System to break down applications refused by grounds of refusal.

Nationality of applicant	*Number of applications refused 1 June 2003 to 30 April 2004*
Bulgaria	42
Czech Rep.	4
Estonia	8
Hungary	3
Latvia	85
Lithuania	211
Poland	688
Romania	59
Slovakia	10
Slovenia	0
Turkey	49

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* maximum, *(b)* mean and *(c)* minimum number of days was between the date of receipt of an application for the right of establishment in business under EU association agreements and the date of posting the refusal notice to the applicant between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004. [207538]

Mr. Browne: The table sets out the mean, minimum and maximum number of days between receipt of an application for the right of establishment in business under EC Association Agreements and the date of posting the refusal notice to the applicant. The information refers to applications refused between 1 June 2003 and 30 April 2004.

ECAA cases refused 1 June 2003 to 30 April 2004	*Number of days between receipt in IND and posting of refusal*
Minimum	Same day service at Public Enquiry Office[1]
Mean average	144.3
Maximum	1,906

[1] ECAA applications are not normally handled by Public Enquiry Offices but these represent a very small number that were done on an exceptional basis.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207179]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the reply the former Home Secretary (Mr. Blunkett) gave on 1 September 2003, *Official Report*, column 1000W.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will give details of the first warning the UK Government received about the impending tsunami on 26 December 2004; and if he will make a statement. [207796]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to my reply given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 28W, to my hon. Friend for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith).

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the priorities are for the help that his Department is giving to those countries affected by the Boxing Day tsunami. [210584]

Hilary Benn: In the days immediately following the disaster, DFID's priorities were to ensure that basic emergency assistance such as food, shelter, water and sanitation and medical support reached those most in need. DFID also prioritised supporting the overall co-ordination and capacity of the international response through the United Nations, including the gathering of information on needs.

As most of the affected countries are moving into a recovery stage, DFID's present priorities are to continue to ensure that assistance is reaching all affected people, push to get coordination mechanisms fully operational, unblock remaining logistic bottlenecks, ensure the right key personnel are in place and provide assistance where requested by DFID's field teams or through direct requests from the affected governments or the United Nations.

CDC/Actis Capital

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what minimum percentage return the Government expects on investments by CDC/Actis Capital. [210518]

Hilary Benn: DFID has agreed with the Treasury, a target overall rate of return of 5 per cent. per annum on the capital that the Government have invested in CDC. The individual Funds in which CDC's capital is invested have differing target rates of return depending on their particular objectives and the markets in which they are working.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the rate of return on investments by CDC/Actis Capital was in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004. [210519]

Hilary Benn: The rate of return on investments made by CDC were as follows for the following periods:

	Percentage
(a) 2001	-11.1
(b) 2002	6.5
(c) 2003	9.6
(d) 2004	[1]14.6

[1] Estimated—figures only available to 30 September

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) if he will list investments by CDC/Actis Capital in the energy sector in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004 broken down by (i) amount and (ii) percentage of the total CDC/Actis Capital portfolio; [210520]

(2) how much CDC/Actis Capital has invested in renewable energy; and what percentage of its total energy portfolio this figure represents; [210521]

(3) what discussions his Department has had with CDC/Actis Capital about targets for their investment in renewable energy. [210522]

Hilary Benn: CDC made 27 investments in the energy sector in the period between 2001 and 2004. The investments were in the following companies:

Ace Power Generation Anuradhapura (Pvt) Ltd.
Ace Power Generation Matara (Pvt) Ltd.
Asia Power Co.
Azito
Caribbean Basin Power Fund
Compania Boliviana de Energia Electrica
Compania de Electricidad de Puerto Plata
DHL Trust
Dominica Electricity Services Ltd.
Empresa Energetica Corinto
Guyana Power and Light
Haina Investment Company
Haripur (Pvt) Ltd. / Meghnaghat (Pvt) Ltd.
Hopewell Power (Philippines) Corporation
Hub Power Co. Ltd.
Jamaica Private Power Co.
Kelvin Power
La Compania de Electricidad de San Pedro De Macoris
Mirant Sual Corporation
Sidi Krir
St. Lucia Electricity Services Ltd.
Orzunil
Lanco Kondapalli
Puerto Quetzal Power Ltd. Liability Co.
Songas Company Ltd.
Southern Cone Power Ltd.
Tsavo Power Co. Ltd.

Amounts invested in each company are commercially confidential. Total annual investments by CDC in the energy sector and their percentage of total investments were as follows:

	Amount (£ million)	*Percentage*
2001	147	11
2002	203	15
2003	343	26
2004	317	27

CDC has invested US$104 million in renewable energy projects, which represents some 17 per cent. of its total energy portfolio. These figures are based on 31 December 2004 valuations.

DFID has had no discussions with CDC about targets for their investment in renewable energy. However, we understand that CDC is exploring the possibilities of further investment in renewable energy with Actis, its main investment manager.

Congolese Refugees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of people leaving the Democratic Republic of Congo since the beginning of 2005 to seek refuge in each of the neighbouring countries; and if he will make a statement. [210713]

Hilary Benn: Through reporting from the office United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and maintenance of contact with other humanitarian agencies DFID continues to monitor the recent increased movement of Congolese refugees across the Democratic Republic of Congo/Uganda border.

(i) 5,000–7,000 refugees crossed into Uganda between 2 and 8 January, fleeing fighting between Hema and Lendu groups in Ituri. They crossed Lake Albert and are encamped at Nkondo in Hoima District, western Uganda. These are mostly women and children. The area where they are camped is difficult to access. UNHCR would like them to move to an established refugee camp (Kyaka II) in Kyenjojo district, but the refugees are reluctant to move without their menfolk. To date only a few have agreed to do so.

(ii) 10,100 refugees, mainly women and children, arrived in Ishasha in Kanungu district near Lake Edward, between 9 and 15 January. This movement was in response to fighting between Mai-Mai and Rally for Congolese Democracy groups in North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. There are reports that up to 7000 of these people have now returned to the DRC. There are also reports that continued fighting might result in the arrival of more refugees from the DRC in the near future. Assessments are ongoing and the refugees are receiving support from UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), and Medecins Sans Frontieres.

DFID remains in close contact with the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies and will continue to monitor developments.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* information his Department has received and *(b)* assessment his Department has made of the (i) size and (ii) nature of the two groups of Congolese refugees reported by the UN refugee agency on 18 January to have crossed into Uganda during the weeks of 10 and 17 January; and if he will make a statement. [210714]

Hilary Benn: DFID continues to monitor the recent increased movement of Congolese refugees across the border of Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda through reporting from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and by maintaining contact with other humanitarian agencies.

DFID has information covering the period since 1 January 2005, and we know, that:

(i) Between 5,000 and 7,000 refugees crossed into Uganda over the period of 2–8 January, fleeing fighting between Hema and Lendu groups in Ituri. They crossed Lake Albert and are encamped at Nkondo in Hoima District, western Uganda. These are mostly women and children. The area where they are camped is difficult to access. The UNHCR would like them to move to an established refugee camp (Kyaka II) in the Kyenjojo district.

(ii) 10,100 refugees, mainly women and children, arrived in Ishasha in Kanungu district near Lake Edward, between 9 and 15 January. This movement was in response to fighting between Mai-Mai and Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RDC) groups in North Kivu, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. There are reports that up to 7,000 of these people have now returned to the DRC, while approximately 1,000 have been transferred to Kyaka II. There are also reports that continued fighting might result in the arrival of more refugees from DRC in the near future. The refugees are receiving support from the UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Food Programme (WFP), and Medecins Sans Frontieres.

DFID remains in close contact with the UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies, and will continue to monitor developments.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much of his Department's spending in each less developed country in each of the last five years was directed to *(a)* direct budgetary support, *(b)* non-governmental organisations and *(c)* debt relief. [210318]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the DFID annual report "Statistics in International Development" (SID) which contains some of the information requested. The latest (2004) edition is available in the House of Commons Library and on-line at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sid2004/sid2004.asp

(a) The following table (drawn largely from SID Table 10.1) shows spending on direct budgetary support, now more commonly termed "Poverty Reduction Budget Support" or PRBS. The table shows actual spend, and spend as a proportion of DFID's total bilateral programme aid to the relevant countries. This table includes data for the last four years. Data for 1999–2000 could only be provided at a disproportionate cost. Countries not included in the table have not received PRBS. Note, DFID spends some of its funds through multilateral agencies, some of which also distribute direct budget support. While we impute a notional "share" of money we give to the EC, World Bank or other agencies as being spent in individual countries, we are not able to split this down further to show how much is spent as direct budget support.

(b) DFID is not able to distinguish the total amount of bilateral aid channelled through non-governmental organisations in individual countries, as this information is not held centrally. Table 7 of SID contains a column showing for each country, the amount of funds spent as "Grants and other aid in kind". These will include sums dispersed via non-governmental organisations.

(c) Debt relief to individual countries in each of the last five years is shown in SID. Table 7 is split into 7.1 which contains data on African countries, 7.2 with data on the Americas, 7.3-Asia, 7.4-Europe and 7.5-Pacific.

Poverty reduction budget support to recipient countries

	2000–01		*2001–02*	
	Expenditure (£ million)	*Percentage of programme*	*Expenditure (£ million)*	*Percentage of programme*
Africa:				
Ethiopia	—	—	—	—
Ghana	40.0	55	25.0	45
Kenya	15.0	29	—	—
Malawi	30.0	53	12.5	27

Poverty reduction budget support to recipient countries

	2000–01		*2001–02*	
	Expenditure (£ million)	*Percentage of programme*	*Expenditure (£ million)*	*Percentage of programme*
Mozambique	10.0	24	20.0	49
Rwanda	25.4	78	18.0	67
Sierra Leone	19.5	56	10.0	27
Tanzania	40.0	58	35.0	54
Uganda	60.0	70	47.0	69
Zambia	15.0	27	—	—
Total Africa	254.9	39	167.5	29
Americas:				
Bolivia	—	—	2.6	20
Total Americas	—	—	2.6	3
Asia:				
Afghanistan	—	—	—	—
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—
East Timor	—	—	—	—
India	—	—	65.0	35
Pakistan	—	—	20.0	46
Vietnam	—	—	7.0	44
Total Asia	—	—	92.0	18
Europe:				
Macedonia (FYR of)	—	—	3.0	38
17 Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)	10.4	67.0	7.0	60
Total Europe	10.4	9	10.0	10
Total poverty reduction budget support	265.3	19	272.1	18

	2002–03		*2003–04*	
	Expenditure (£ million)	*Percentage of programme*	*Expenditure (£ million)*	*Percentage of programme*
Africa:				
Ethiopia	10.0	23	20.0	47
Ghana	20.0	36	25.0	37
Kenya	—	—	—	—
Malawi	—	—	10.0	18
Mozambique	10.0	26	15.0	41
Rwanda	22.0	69	18.8	70
Sierra Leone	10.0	31	10.0	29
Tanzania	45.0	47	60.0	75
Uganda	29.5	54	30.0	54
Zambia	7.6	18	3.8	13
Total Africa	154.1	21	192.6	27
Americas:				
Bolivia	1.3	14	3.3	47
Total Americas	1.3	1.3	3.3	4
Asia:				
Afghanistan	15.0	20	30.0	38
Bangladesh	6.6	9	—	—
East Timor	4.0	61	4.0	89
India	30.0	19	55.0	28
Pakistan	20.0	52	50.0	75
Vietnam	7.0	37	10.0	43
Total Asia	82.6	15	149.0	19
Europe:				
Macedonia (FYR of)	—	—	—	—
17 Serbia and Montenegro (including Kosovo)	—	—	—	—
Total Europe	—	—	—	—
Total Poverty Reduction Budget Support	238.0	13	344.9	17

1. Spend figures from SID 2004 Table 10.1.

2. Excludes budgetary aid to Montserrat and St Helena.

3. The programme figures shown above refer to DFID bilateral programme.

EU Development Aid

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries are the top 10 recipients of EU development aid; how much aid was given to each in the last year for which figures are available; and what the average annual income was in each country in that year. [211424]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In 2003, the most recent year for which figures are available, the top ten recipients of European Commission (EC) Official Development Assistance (ODA) were:

Country	*EC ODA (US$ million)*	*Gross national income (GNI) per capita (US$)*
Serbia and Montenegro	314.76	1,910
Sudan	247.05	460
Afghanistan	208.03	[1]—
Tanzania	185.09	290
Palestinian admin areas	181.06	1,110
Ethiopia	149.14	90
Morocco	147.17	1,320
Turkey	140.37	2,790
Bosnia-Herzegovina	135.83	1,540
South Africa	134.03	2,780

[1] Not currently available.

Afghanistan is estimated to be low income (less than $765).

Source:

EC ODA(Development Assistance Committee

GNI per capita(World Bank, Atlas method

Ghana

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* consultancy and *(b)* equipment was provided under his Department's Integrated Personnel and Payroll Database Project in Ghana in 1999–2000. [210333]

Hilary Benn: In 1999–2000, DFID provided one consultancy for project management services under the Government of Ghana's Integrated Personnel and Payroll Database (IPPD). The role of the project team was to: draw up technical and procurement specifications for the replacement payroll system; improve the quality of payroll data; provide advice and training in payroll implementation; and provide technical support to keep the old payroll system running. DFID also funded a separate two-week procurement mission prior to the purchase of equipment for the project.

DFID procured equipment for IPPD both in the UK and in Ghana. This comprised: hardware to upgrade the existing mainframe computers at the Controller and Accountant General's office; the installation of a local area network; and personal computers on which to run the new payroll and train staff. DFID also provided office equipment (such as desks and computer printers) for the project team within the Controller and Accountant General's office, and two office vehicles.

The Government of Ghana used financial aid from DFID to procure the principal (Oracle) software for the project, which was customised to perform the payroll function. The Government of Ghana also engaged the consultancy services of Provison, Oracle's local agent, to implement the project.

Guinea

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact an improved educational system would have on the social and economic situation in Guinea; how much *(a)* UK and *(b)* EU financial aid is earmarked for improving the education system; and if he will make a statement. [210717]

Hilary Benn: The UK does not have a bilateral development programme with Guinea. DFID has made no assessment of the education system. EU aid to Guinea is currently subject to consultations between the European Commission and the Government of Guinea, under the provisions of Article 96 of the Cotonou Treaty, due to concerns over political and governance issues. An EU Co-operation Strategy and Programme paper has been agreed but not yet signed; it does not envisage major support for education. The World Bank and the USA are the largest education sector donors to Guinea in the period 2001–06. The estimated EC share of support to the education sector in the same period is 8.6 per cent. (€15.6 million).

HIV/AIDS Orphans

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government will take to encourage other G8 and EU member states to endorse and commit resources to implement the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living with HIV and Aids. [211000]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In July this year, DFID was one of the first bilateral development agencies, along with Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to endorse the UNAIDS/UNICEF Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS. Since then we have taken every opportunity to promote its use with governments and other organisations working to provide protection, care and support to children affected by AIDS. This includes children living with HIV and AIDS.

Along with other member states we are engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not address orphans and vulnerable children and we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations.

We will use our presidencies of the G8 and the EU to increase action on AIDS and will encourage those member states who have not yet endorsed the framework to do so. Committing resources to implement the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children through national plans is key to this. We have announced our £150 million spending commitment over three years and will be encouraging other G8 and EU member states to increase their support to national programmes. The

USA has, like us, already earmarked funding. Canada and France see it as a priority issue, while others have yet to follow this line.

The UK is discussing with UNICEF the possibility of hosting the 2005 Global Partners Forum in London in December. This event would present a significant opportunity for G8 and EU members to increase their action in this area.

Responding to the needs of orphans and vulnerable children needs to be part of the larger picture of the AIDS response. By the end of 2005, we want to have agreement among donors and the international system on a well co-ordinated and funded plan to tackle AIDS which will include support for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children.

Iraq

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of money spent on services provided by Adam Smith International Ltd. in connection with the reconstruction of Iraq; what additional contracts they have secured since September 2004; what expenditure his Department has allocated to the organisation for future spending; and if he will make a statement. [210499]

Hilary Benn: Adam Smith International Ltd. won an open competition to implement the Emergency Public Administration Programme in Iraq. A Review was recently conducted on progress of the project. The review concluded that, despite the difficult security environment, Adam Smith International Ltd. has been effective in helping the Iraqi Interim Government set up structures at the centre of Government and in supporting Public Financial Management.

Adam Smith International Ltd. has secured no additional contracts in Iraq since September 2004.

No additional funds have been allocated for future spending specifically with Adam Smith International Ltd. Any future business will be subject to the European Union Directives. These ensure contracts are awarded through transparently fair and open processes.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate has been made of the amount of wheat required to feed the Iraqi population in a year; how much wheat it is estimated was produced within Iraq in each of the last five years; how much wheat it is estimated has been imported into Iraq in each of the last five years; at what estimated cost; what the price of wheat on the Iraqi market is; and if he will make a statement. [210661]

Hilary Benn: Based on current consumption patterns, the amount of wheat required to feed the Iraqi population annually is around 5 million metric tonnes (MT). Actual demand over the medium term will depend on food consumption preferences, the relative prices of substitutes for and complements to wheat-based products, and other factors such as population growth.

Domestic wheat production over the last five years was as follows:

	Million metric tonne
2004	2.2
2003	2.0
2002	1.8
2001	0.7
2000	0.5

Average annual wheat production over the 10 years before 2003 was around 1.1 million MT.

Imports of wheat into Iraq over the last five years, and their estimated market costs (in 2004 prices) were as follows:

	Million metric tonne	*US$ million*
2004	3.3	768
2003	1.8	419
2002	1.6	368
2001	2.8	652
2000	3.2	745

The price of wheat in the Iraqi market is estimated to be about 120 Iraqi Dinars (c. 8 US cents) per kilo for domestically grown wheat, and about 340 Iraqi Dinars (c. 23 US cents) for imported wheat. This differential reflects Iraqi consumers' preference for imported over domestically produced wheat.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the provision of *(a)* water, *(b)* hospital care and *(c)* schools for residents who have returned to Fallujah; and what assessment he has made of educational provision for the children of residents who have not returned; [210935]

(2) what assessment he has made of the number of internally displaced persons from Fallujah who are planning to settle out of Fallujah for an extended period; [210936]

(3) what assessment he has made of the number of homes in Fallujah which *(a)* sustained damage and *(b)* sustained damage such as to render them unfit for habitation since the commencement of military operations against insurgents in November 2004. [210937]

Hilary Benn: The Interim Iraqi Government (IIG), with support from Multi-National Forces (MNF), has ensured that adequate supplies of food, water, shelter, fuel and health care are available to meet the essential needs of residents returning to Fallujah. Repairs to the water network have begun, and piped water is now available in a number of districts. In other districts, supplies are provided by tanker. Two hospitals and several health clinics are open in Fallujah to provide medical care. Preparations are being made to re-open schools in Fallujah, with five due to be opened by early February. 125 schools in the areas around Fallujah have re-opened to help cater for the children of residents and displaced people who are living there.

No assessment has been made of the number of people displaced from Fallujah who are planning to settle elsewhere for an extended period.

The IIG is planning to undertake a detailed assessment of damage to housing in Fallujah shortly. Preliminary estimates suggest that up to half the buildings in the city may have sustained substantial damage, with many of these rendered unfit for habitation, and that over 75 per cent. suffered some damage.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has received from UK non-governmental organisations relating to the state of the infrastructure in Fallujah; and if he will make a statement. [211052]

Hilary Benn: I have not received any such representations; however DFID staff have briefed Amman-based NGOs on the situation in Fallujah.

Millennium Development Goals

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the percentage of the total UK *(a)* bilateral aid budget and *(b)* multilateral aid budget that is available on the ground for Millennium Development Goal projects. [210198]

Hilary Benn: All DFID's development assistance is directed towards achieving the MDGs. Table 20 of the 2004 edition of DFID's annual volume "Statistics in International Development" (SID) shows the allocation of bilateral funds to individual MDGs for 2003–04. Funds can be legitimately scored against more than one MDG—for example, HIV/AIDS and maternal mortality. A copy of this report is available in the House of Commons Library and on line at: http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/sid2004/sid2004.asp.

DFID is working closely with multilateral organisations to ensure that they too prioritise MDG delivery, and that DFID provided funds are used effectively to deliver results on the ground.

Ugandan Refugees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the number of refugees in Uganda from neighbouring countries and *(b)* the number of repatriations and new arrivals per month since July 2004; how much humanitarian assistance has been delivered to Uganda for the corresponding months by (i) the UK, (ii) the EU and (iii) the UN; and if he will make a statement. [210716]

Hilary Benn: Uganda currently hosts 230,194 refugees. These are drawn mainly from Sudan, Rwanda and the Congo. The largest number, approximately 130,000, are Sudanese. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is unable to provide a monthly break down of the number of repatriations and new arrivals. Since January 2004, 2,449 refugees have been repatriated and there have been approximately 19,027 new arrivals.

In 2004, humanitarian assistance to Uganda totalled £81 million. During this period, the UK provided over £10 million, which was channelled through the UN system and the Red Cross. Other EU member states and the European Commission provided £14.1 million and £18.4 million respectively. In both cases this support was channelled through the UN system, the Red Cross and NGOs. In total the United Nations Consolidated Appeal received funding of £66.8 million, which represented 100 per cent. of its requested requirements.

The UK was the third largest humanitarian donor to Uganda in 2004. Addressing humanitarian needs will remain an important objective for our Uganda programme.

Vietnam

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to help the Vietnamese Government in tackling HIV/AIDS. [210528]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has approved £16.4 million to help the Government of Vietnam prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS in Vietnam. This support began in January 2004 and will, over a 5-year period, seek to raise the level of protection of high-risk groups by promoting condom use, and use advertising campaigns to get HIV/AIDS prevention messages across to the country at large. It is too early to gauge results a year in, but around 40 million condoms were distributed to selected sites in 2004 which is expected to help reduce the prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS among high-risk groups. This support is co-financed with the Norwegian Government and managed by the World Health Organisation and the Vietnamese Ministry of Health.

DFID, together with other key donors has established a co-ordination mechanism to help promote the UNAIDS "Three Ones" approach to tackling HIV/AIDS (that is "One" action framework, "One" national coordinating authority, and "One" national monitoring and evaluation system. This will reduce the fragmentation of donor support and maximise the capacity of Government to respond to HIV/AIDS.

DFID is planning to double its contribution to the HIV/AIDS Global Fund. Vietnam has received US$12 million from this fund over the period 2002 to 2005. US$7 million of this amount for HIV/AIDS.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work Programme

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Coventry, South have received *(a)* full and *(b)* partial grants from the Access to Work programme in each year since its introduction. [210702]

Maria Eagle: Access to Work is a specialist disability programme, which provides practical advice and support to help disabled people enter or stay in paid employment. The support is aimed at overcoming work related obstacles resulting from disability. It does this through a system of grants towards the cost of providing support. The amount of support available to any individual will depend on their work related needs resulting from disability.

Information is not available at constituency level. The available information for the west midlands region is in the table.

Number of people helped by the Access to Work programme in the West Midlands region

	2002–03	*2003–04*
New beneficiaries	1,492	1,279
Existing beneficiaries	1,679	1,426
Total beneficiaries	3,171	2,705

Notes:
1. Figures broken down by region are not available for earlier years.
2. New beneficiaries are people who receive access to work assistance for the first time ever within the financial year. Existing beneficiaries are people who received access to work assistance in a previous financial year, and continue to receive financial support.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus internal Management Information

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have died from carbon monoxide poisoning in the UK in each year since 1997. [210083]

Jane Kennedy: The following table provides information for gas related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning fatalities:

Number of fatal injuries relating to the supply and use of flammable gas[1]

	CO poisoning
1996–97	31
1997–98	28
1998–99	37
1999–2000	26
2000–01	25
2001–02	22
2002–03	20
2003–04[2]	12

[1] The table shows the number of fatalities reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 1995 in Great Britain.

[2] Provisional.

Notes:
1. Mainly piped gas but also includes bottled liquid petroleum gas (LPG).
2. The figure for CO deaths in 2003–04 is the lowest on record.

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to ensure that householders *(a)* obtain and *(b)* use certified carbon monoxide detectors. [210085]

Jane Kennedy: HSE provides the public with free information regarding the advantages of carbon monoxide (CO) detectors through publications and a telephone helpline. The gas industry has also advised householders of the advantages of CO detectors.

CO alarms conforming to British Standards are a useful supplementary precaution but cannot be regarded as a substitute for the safe installation and maintenance of gas equipment by competent installers registered with the Council for Registered Gas Installers(CORGI.

British Gas is currently developing a programme for supplying vulnerable groups with free CO detectors.

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with gas suppliers on *(a)* the need for regular gas checks and *(b)* the efficient operations of gas appliances in domestic homes. [210086]

Jane Kennedy: The Health and Safety Executive met with the Energy Retail Association on 18 January 2005 about these matters. The Association is developing a national gas safety strategy that includes publicity about the need for regular maintenance of gas appliances. Regular maintenance and checks for safety assist the efficient functioning of gas appliances and systems.

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many prosecutions there have been in each of the last 10 years of landlords whose neglect of gas appliances caused the death of their tenants. [210087]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not available in the format requested. The following table provides information about the number of prosecutions of landlords instituted by HSE following deaths related to the supply and use of flammable gas.

	Number of cases
1996–97	0
1997–98	4
1998–99	3
1999–2000	5
2000–01	2
2001–02	1
2002–03	0
2003–04 (Provisional)	0

Note:
Data relates to cases under (i) Section 3 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 relating to duties owed by employers and the self employed to persons who are not their employees and under (ii) regulations 35 and 36 of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 and 1998 respectively that place specific duties on landlords and regulation 3(1) of both that relates to the competence of people carrying out gas work. Information from earlier years is not readily available.

Source:
Health and Safety Executive, Safety and Enforcement Statistics

Child Support Agency

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is possible to trace cases by *(a)* name and *(b)* address on the new Child Support Agency computer. [209368]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Andrew Turner, dated 26 January 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, whether it is possible to trace cases by name and address on the new Child Support Agency computer.

Cases can be traced on the new computer system by searching with either:

The client's national insurance number or child support reference number; or

The client's full surname, forename(s) and gender (with date of birth being an optional additional criteria).

It is currently not possible to search using a client's address.

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of its budget the Independent Living Funds made available to *(a)* people with severe learning impairments and *(b)* families or carers with caring responsibilities for people with severe learning impairments in each year since 2001. [211244]

Maria Eagle: The Independent Living Funds (ILFs) make payments direct to the disabled client, they do not make payments to families or carers. However, some users may have third parties who provide assistance with managing personal assistance (PA) support and finances, but the ILFs database does not contain sufficient information to analyse payments according to who manages the money. The following table shows the percentage of the ILFs budget that has been paid directly to clients with severe learning impairments, since financial year 2001–02 to financial year 2003–04.

	Total ILFs budget (£ million)	*Proportion paid to clients with severe learning impairments (percentage)*
2001–02	155.9	17.3
2002–03	178.0	18.5
2003–04	194.0	20.9

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Independent Living Fund is required to explain the reasons for alterations in its funding arrangements to parties affected by such alterations. [211245]

Maria Eagle: Awards from the Independent Living Funds (ILFs) depend on the extent to which a person requires help towards personal care and domestic support. The ILFs conduct review visits of each client every two years and if it is apparent that clients' circumstances have changed, alterations to their awards would be made and clients would be made fully aware of the change and the reasons for the change.

Where the ILFs make policy alterations that may have a potential impact on clients' awards, they also notify clients of these changes and the reasons associated with these changes.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the budget of the Independent Living Fund was for each year since 2001. [211246]

Maria Eagle: There are two Independent Living Funds—the Independent Living (Extension) Fund and the Independent Living (1993) Fund.

The budget for both funds since 2001 is as follows:

	Budget (£ million)
2001–02	155.9
2002–03	178.0
2003–04	194.0
2004–05	214.3

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 624–25W, on pensions, how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women aged 54 years and over are contracted out with an appropriate personal pension or stakeholder pension. [211456]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is in the table.

Number of men and women aged 54 and over contracted out with an appropriate personal pension or stakeholder pension

Gender	*Appropriate personal pension*	*Stakeholder pension*
Men	213,000	[1]1,000
Women	28,000	[1]1,000

[1] Figures for stakeholder pensions are subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used only as a guide.

Note:

1. Figures are based on scheme membership at the end of the 2002–03 tax year, the latest year for which the information is available.
2. They include those with earnings below the LEL (for example people on a career break or who are unemployed) who would not qualify for an age-related rebate for the 2002–03 tax year.
3. Figures for appropriate personal pensions do not include those for stakeholder pensions.

Source:

"Second Tier Pension Provision" published by the Department for Work and Pensions using the Lifetime Labour Market Database which uses a 1 per cent. sample of national insurance records.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoptions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adoptions have taken place in each of the last five years of children in care for *(a)* less than and *(b)* more than six months. [210258]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of looked after children adopted for the last five years by duration of care.

Number

				Year ending 31 March	
England	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Children looked after adopted	2,700	3,100	3,400	3,500	3,700
Duration of final period of care[1]					
Under 6 months	10	20	10	10	10
Over 6 months	2,700	3,000	3,400	3,500	3,700

[1] Period of care refers to a continuous period of being looked after, which may include more than one placement or legal status.

Note: Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source: AD1, KS1 and SSDA903 returns

A-levels

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many GCE A-level entries of 16 to 18-year-old students there have been in *(a)* biological sciences, *(b)* chemistry, *(c)* physics, *(d)* mathematics, *(e)* French, *(f)* German, *(g)* Spanish and *(h)* media studies in each year since 1997; and what the mark required for an A grade has been in each subject by each of the examination boards offering them in each year. [209810]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on GCE A-levels entries for 16 to 18-year-olds in all schools and colleges between 1997 and 2004 is given in the table:

Males and Females	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*	*2001*	*2000*	*1999*	*1998*	*1997*
Biological sciences	44,290	43,902	45,407	44,592	46,190	47,192	48,897	47,807
Chemistry	32,151	31,065	32,324	33,871	35,290	35,831	37,103	36,613
Physics	24,645	26,278	27,860	28,031	28,191	29,552	29,672	28,903
Mathematics	51,212	49,183	48,654	59,220	58,689	61,245	61,800	61,323
French	12,486	12,904	13,599	15,393	15,240	17,774	19,629	21,446
German	5,642	6,068	6,367	7,607	7,581	8,527	8,903	9,029
Spanish	4,650	4,504	4,430	4,501	4,516	4,640	4,499	4,338
Media/film/TV studies	20,997	19,270	16,748	13,656	12,166	11,374	10,805	8,967
All subjects	676,397	662,693	645,041	681,578	672,518	680,098	681,168	665,549

Since 2002 the A-level standard has been set and maintained year on year through the setting of grade boundaries for assessment. These grade boundaries are then translated into fixed points on a uniform mark scale (UMS). For A-level the maximum total UMS score is always 600. An A grade is awarded for a score of 480+ UMS marks.

The information for pre-2002 boundaries will be placed in the House of Commons Library when available.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to develop a Graduate Apprenticeship Scheme. [211224]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Following the launch of the Learning Age Green Paper (DfEE 1998) we did pump prime an initiative known as the Graduate Apprenticeship. These combined a higher education qualification (honours degree or higher) with structured work based learning underpinned by key skills and national vocational qualifications units. This early work provided a useful platform for developing foundation degrees which are now the main vehicle we have for expanding vocational higher education opportunities. They are designed with employers and combine work based learning with academic study. Since they were introduced in 2001 they have grown in popularity and there are currently 37,000 students on these programmes studying either full time or part time, including those studying with the backing of their employer. We are also working with HEFCE, the LSC and Sector Skills Councils at ways of strengthening progression for apprenticeships into higher education, including through foundation degrees, and we're still working with those sectors who feel there is still scope for a level 4 apprenticeship.

Artisan Shortfalls

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the shortfall in the London area of trained *(a)* plumbers, *(b)* construction workers and *(c)* electricians. [210477]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Research carried out by CITB-Construction Skills in 2003, estimates the average annual requirement for plumbers, construction workers and electricians over the period 2003–2007 as:

CITB-construction skills in 2003

	Average annual requirement
Electrical	1,090
Plumbing[1]	680
Construction[2]	7,030

[1] Including HV (Heating and Ventilation) RAC (Refrigeration and Air Conditioning)

[2] Less plumbing and electrical

CITB-Construction Skills are one of the first four Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) to develop and publish a draft Sector Skills Agreement which articulates proposed action to address the construction sectors skill needs. Their proposals include setting specific industry targets for increasing the number of companies investing in training and increasing the number of workers completing apprenticeships.

Child Abuse (School Staff)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many formal references to her Department by heads of schools with suspicions about child abuse activities by members of staff have been made in each of the last 10 years. [210233]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is not collected in a format to allow an answer to the question as asked. However, figures representing the total number of referrals to the Department in each of the last three years are set out in the following table. These include both child abuse and non child abuse issues from all sources that are required to report concerns to the Secretary of State, including local education authorities, supply agencies, school governors, the police and headteachers.

	Number of referrals from all sources
2004	1,362
2003	1,147
2002	1,007

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many young people claimed education maintenance allowance in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by constituency. [211307]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and been paid EMA is available at local authority level rather than by constituency. The last complete academic year (2003/2004) for which figures are available is 2003/04.

Number of students who received one or more EMA payments, 2003/04

LEA number	*LEA*	*All*
202	Camden	1,266
203	Greenwich	1,490
204	Hackney	2,260
205	Hammersmith and Fulham	951
206	Islington	1,350
208	Lambeth	1,760
209	Lewisham	1,980
210	Southwark	1,764
211	Tower Hamlets	2,897
212	Wandsworth	1,159
301	Barking and Dagenham	987
304	Brent	1,902
307	Ealing	1,819
309	Haringey	1,760
316	Newham	2,806
320	Waltham Forest	1,140
330	Birmingham	9,877
331	Coventry	2,449
333	Sandwell	2,070
335	Walsall	2,550
336	Wolverhampton	2,455
340	Knowsley	1,990
341	Liverpool	4,950
342	St. Helens	1,464
344	Wirral	2,497
350	Bolton	2,274
352	Manchester	4,733
353	Oldham	2,539
355	Salford	1,283
357	Tameside	2,149
359	Wigan	2,484
370	Barnsley	1,439
371	Doncaster	2,550
373	Sheffield	3,987
380	Bradford	4,792
383	Leeds	4,964
384	Wakefield	2,291
390	Gateshead	1,820
392	North Tyneside	1,557
393	South Tyneside	1,621
394	Sunderland	[1]—
805	Hartlepool	815
806	Middlesbrough	1,122
810	Kingston Upon Hull	2,061
812	North East Lincolnshire	1,394
821	Luton	1,856
852	Southampton	1,325
856	Leicester	3,561
861	Stoke-on-Trent	2,716
876	Halton	1,153
885	Worcestershire	3,075
888	Lancashire	[1]—
892	Nottingham	3,001
908	Cornwall	5,116
929	Northumberland	2,673
935	Suffolk	[1]—

[1] No data available for Sunderland, Lancashire or Suffolk (pure transport pilots).

Education Provision (Northamptonshire)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the capital expenditure on schools was in Northampton in each year from 1985 to 2004. [211285]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The capital allocations to Northamptonshire in respect of schools, for which information is available centrally, are set out in the following table.

	£000
1996–97	7,524
1997–98	8,453
1998–99	15,394
1999–2000	12,308
2000–01	26,802
2001–02	22,935
2002–03	56,011
2003–04	130,466
2004–05	36,015

The figures include £23,700,000 and £100,700,000 Private finance initiative credits in 2002–03 and 2003–04 respectively. Capital expenditure on schools in a particular year will differ from the above due to timing differences, the level of resources available locally, and priorities in the local asset management plan.

Europass Initiative

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on her Department's policy towards UK participation in the Europass initiative. [211364]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK intends to participate fully in the new Europass initiative for the benefit it will bring to people wanting to explain their qualifications and competences when moving throughout Europe. We are now in the process of appointing a National Europass Centre to coordinate activities.

European Youth Initiatives

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on European Communities planned actions in the field of youth, with particular reference to projects arising from COM (2004) 337 and from the New Impetus for European Youth White Paper. [211378]

Dr. Howells: In July 2004, the European Commission published its proposal for a decision to create a "Youth In Action programme for the period 2007–13". This is the only planned action involving projects in the field of youth. The proposal is currently being negotiated in Council Working Party and the timetable for the completion of this negotiation is at present uncertain.

The 2001 Commission White Paper "A New Impetus for European Youth" identified four priority areas for policy cooperation and development:

Participation

Information

Voluntary Activities

Greater Understanding of Youth

Since then, EU Youth Ministers have agreed common objectives for all four policy areas in the form of Council Resolutions. Document COM (2004) 337 contained the proposals for common objectives for voluntary activities.

The Commission will invite member states to report on their progress towards meeting these objectives by the end of 2005 (participation and information); by the end of 2006 (voluntary activities) and by the end of 2008 (a greater understanding and knowledge of youth).

GCSEs

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children left school in the latest year for which figures are available without a GCSE qualification. [211029]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The number of children that failed to achieve a GCSE or equivalent qualification in 2003/04 was 26,652, which represents 4.1 per cent. of the total number of 15-year-old pupils.

Higher Education (Manchester)

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 18 year-olds who were *(a)* resident in the City of Manchester and *(b)* resident in the Manchester, Withington constituency, entered higher education in the academic year 2002–03. [209843]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* Participation rates at constituency level are not calculated by the department. The available information for 2002–03 is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18-year-old applicants from Manchester LEA accepted through UCAS to full time first degree and HMD courses.

The participation rates calculated are based upon all 18-year-olds, not just those who have been in secondary education. The population numbers are estimates and can be volatile from year to year, hence participation rates should be used only as a guide to the long term trend in participation in a particular area.

Proportion of students aged 18 accepted through UCAS to full-time undergraduate courses in the UK, by LEA of domicile, 2002–03

Domicile	*Accepted applicants aged 18*	*Percentage of 18-year-olds*
Manchester LEA[1]	762	12.1
England	134,785	22.0

[1] The figures are derived from information collected on the UCAS application form. UCAS allocates an Area of Permanent Residence (APR) to each applicant, based upon their correspondence address, which is believed to largely correspond to LEAs, however, there may be some small differences between the postcodes coded under UCAS's APR classification and those coded under the Office of National Statistics (ONS) classifications.

Source:

Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

The recent HEFCE publication "Young participation in higher education" (HEFCE 2005/03) does look at the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by parliamentary constituency. A discussion of the participation divisions and trends (18-year-olds in 1994 to 18 year-olds in 2000) for constituencies is contained in the report [sections 2.12, 3.8 and 4.1].

In addition participation rates for parliamentary constituencies based on this work are given on the supporting POLAR website (www.hefce.ac.uk/polar). These indicate that, for the cohorts reaching 18 between 1997 and 1999, 18 per cent. of young people living in Manchester LEA and 34 per cent. of young people living in the Manchester, Withington constituency entered higher education at age 18 or 19 (the English average for these cohorts is 29 per cent.).

Language Teachers

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the increase in the number of language teachers that would be needed to implement the recommendations of the Tomlinson Report; [211237]

(2) what assessment she has made of the workforce training requirements of the implementation of the recommendation of the Tomlinson Report that languages should be either an elective or compulsory component in other specialisations. [211238]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are currently preparing a White Paper on the 14–19 phase, including our response to the recommendations of the final report of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform chaired by Mike Tomlinson. Our White Paper, which will be published soon, will include an assessment of the impact of our recommendations on work force; training; and teaching and learning in the 14–19 phase.

Medical Students

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students were at medical schools in the United Kingdom at 1 December 2004. [209407]

Dr. Howells: The most recent information from the Higher Education Statistics (HESA) showing total student enrolments is for 1 December 2003 and is shown in the table. Comparable figures for 2004 will be available in December 2005.

However, provisional information collected by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

(HEFCE) shows that the number of entrants to undergraduate medical courses in England in 2004/05 rose by 4 per cent. compared with 2003/04.

Enrolments on clinical and pre-clinical medical courses at UK HEIs: 2003/04

	Enrolments
Postgraduate	11,535
Undergraduate	31,675
Total	43,210

Note:

Figures are a snapshot count as at 1 December, and are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

New Deal for Schools

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much schools in Coventry, South have received under the New Deal for Schools. [210800]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The amounts allocated to Coventry, South under the New Deal for Schools programme are set out in the table.

	Amounts allocated (£)
1997–98	668,000
1998–99	441,000
1999–2000	1,941,000
2000–01	4,398,000

Per Capita Funding

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the spending per head on pupils in Nottingham, North constituency was in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the latest period for which figures are available. [211018]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is submitted to the Department according to local education authority areas, rather than districts within an LEA. Nottingham, North forms part of City of Nottingham LEA. The information is contained within the following table:

Combined LEA and school based expenditure[1, 2] per pupil[3], cash terms[6], provisional data[2] as reported by City of Nottingham LEA[5]

	£ per pupil
1997–98[2, 4, 5]	2,570
2003–04[2, 4]	4,910

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).

[2] 1997–98 financial data are taken from (pre local government reorganisation) Nottinghamshire LEA's Revenue Outturn spending return submitted to the Department for Environment, Transport and the Regions. 2003–04 financial data are taken from City of Nottingham LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement (Table A) submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. 2003–04 data remains provisional and is subject to change by the LEA.

[3] Pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including these under fives funded by the LEA and being educated in private settings, pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and other LEA maintained pupils. The pupil data for pupils attending maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools are taken from the DfES Annual Schools Census. Private voluntary and independent (PVI) under five pupil numbers are taken from the Early Years census but are only included in the 2003–04 pupil count. Other LEA maintained pupils includes ail pupils attending schools not maintained by the authority for whom the authority is paying full tuition fees, or educated otherwise than in schools and pupil referral units under arrangements made by the authority drawn from the form 8b submitted to the DfES. Also included as other LEA maintained pupils are all pupils attending pupil referral units who are not registered at a maintained mainstream school drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[4] Financial data is collected at local authority level and not constituency level and as such the figures provided are for City of Nottingham LEA. Local government reorganisation (LGR) took place on the 1 April 1998 where pre-LGR Nottinghamshire LEA was split into City of Nottingham LEA and Nottinghamshire LEA As a result, the 1997–98 data is for pre-LGR Nottinghamshire LEA and the 2003–04 data is for City of Nottingham LEA.

[5] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

[6] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 as at 24 January 2004.

Private Children's Homes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private children's homes have been de-registered *(a)* due to voluntary closure and *(b)* under direction from her inspectors in each of the last five years. [210208]

Margaret Hodge: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection that at this time the Commission does not collect information in the format requested. Information provided by the Commission on the total number of private children's homes that have been de-registered from 1 April 2002 to 19 January 2005 is shown in the following table. Information is not available prior to 1 April 2002, the date when the National Care Standards Commission was created.

	Number
2002/03	91
2003/04	156
2004/05[1]	90

[1] 1 April 2004 to 19 January 2005 only

Pupil Exclusions

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many appeals were made against exclusions in 2004; and how many were upheld, broken down by constituency. [211454]

Derek Twigg: Latest information on exclusion appeals refers to 2002/03 when 1,070 appeals were lodged by parents against the permanent exclusion of their child from maintained primary, secondary and special schools in England.

Information on appeals against permanent exclusion is collected at local education authority level. A table showing the requested information at this level has been placed in the House of Commons Libraries.

School Computers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding has been spent on computers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Coventry South in each year since 1997. [210799]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on funding for ICT at constituency level. However, Coventry South is in Coventry LEA and allocations for this authority, since 1998, are detailed in "Funding for ICT in Schools in England" which is available in the House Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Government funding has been allocated to computers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each of the last seven years. [211705]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to "Funding for ICT in Schools in England" which is available in the House Library.

School Infrastructure

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been granted to the London borough of Wandsworth in helping to improve *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school buildings in each of the last five years. [211064]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The amount of money allocated to the London borough of Wandsworth in helping to improve primary and secondary school buildings in each of the last five years is set out in the table.

	£000
2000–01	8,001
2001–02	7,826
2002–03	13,665
2003–04	11,741
2004–05	10,371

No records are maintained centrally of the split between *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school money, as this is determined locally in accordance with the authority's asset management plan.

School Places Allocations

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many parental appeals were made against the allocation of school places in 2004; and how many were upheld, broken down by constituency. [211455]

Derek Twigg: Latest information on admission appeals refers to 2002/03 when 91,430 appeals were lodged by parents against non-admission of their children to maintained primary and secondary schools in England.

Information on admission appeals is collected at local education authority (LEA) level for community and voluntary controlled schools; and at school level for voluntary aided, aided and foundation schools. A table showing the requested information at LEA level has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

School Sports

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on improving school sports facilities at schools within the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [211060]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information on improving sports facilities at schools within the London borough of Wandsworth is contained within the authority's local asset management plan, and is not held centrally.

Specialist Language Colleges

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entries there were at A-level in *(a)* French, *(b)* German and *(c)* modern languages from schools currently designated as specialist language colleges in each of the last eight years, including entries from such schools before their designation. [210831]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on GCE A-levels entries for 16 to 18-year-olds in specialist language colleges between 1997 and 2004 is given in the table:

	French	*German*	*Other modern languages*	*All modern languages*
2004	914	435	660	2,009
2003	913	512	567	1,992
2002	936	500	525	1,961
2001	1,033	542	484	2,059
2000	1,014	571	444	2,029
1999	1,152	600	443	2,195
1998	1,188	598	407	2,193
1997	1,315	553	361	2,229

The specialist language colleges included are those operational on 1 September 2004.

Truancy

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children played truant in the latest year for which figures are available. [211028]

Derek Twigg: The number of children with at least one half day of unauthorised absence in England in 2003/04 was 1,264,103. This includes pupils absent on holiday without approval from the headteacher or who are late. School attendance at 93.43 per cent. is the highest on record.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alcohol-related Illness

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has regarding the extent of alcohol-related illness in the Province, and how this compares with the position *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 20 years ago. [210042]

Angela Smith: Information is collected on the number of admissions[1] to Northern Ireland hospitals on a range of alcohol-related illnesses. The following table provides figures for selected alcohol-related illnesses in the years 2003–04 (the latest available) and 1996–97 (the earliest comparable data available).

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions.

Description of alcohol-related illness	*Number of admissions* 1996–97	2003–04
Mental/behaviour disorders due to alcohol	3,364	3,513
Alcoholic cardiomyopathy	38	31
Alcoholic gastritis	195	254
Alcoholic hepatitis	72	113
Alcoholic fibrosis/sclerosis of liver	20	15
Alcoholic cirrhosis of liver	174	251
Alcoholic hepatic failure	73	87
Alcoholic liver disease, unspec	123	450
Total	4,059	4,714

Chiropody

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the response of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1524W, how many individuals are waiting for initial chiropody assessment, for those health trusts for which the information is available. [210035]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of individuals awaiting podiatry (chiropody) assessment is not collected centrally. Waiting list information is not recorded by all trusts, and is not recorded on a consistent basis by those trusts that do collect the information. The number of persons waiting for initial podiatry (chiropody) assessment for trusts for which information is available is shown in the following table.

Trust	*Number waiting initial assessment appointment*
South and East Belfast	1,867
North and West Belfast	389
Ulster Community Hospital	554
Down Lisburn	422
Causeway	558
Homefirst	1,291
Foyle	506
Sperrin Lakeland	1,289

Notes:

The information shown is for trusts where data is available. All figures are as at 31 December 2004, except Homefirst Community Health and Social Services Trust, which shows the position at 30 November 2004.

Information relating to Foyle Community Health and Social Services Trust and Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust are based on numbers of persons waiting for treatment, as opposed to initial assessment, by a podiatrist, although in most cases assessment and treatment take place on the same day.

Southern Health and Social Services Board area Trusts do not hold official waiting list figures, although in some trusts this information is recorded by professional staff. Any data collected are held on manual systems and could be provided only at disproportionate cost because of the time required to extract the information.

Source:

Health and Social Services Trusts

Costello Report

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what he expects the costs to be of implementing the recommendations of the Costello Report in the Province. [210761]

Mr. Gardiner: Additional resources of some £20 million have been secured over the next three years for the implementation of the new arrangements for post-primary education. As these new arrangements will largely be developed at local level, decisions on the distribution of the resources available have yet to be taken. I anticipate, however, that they will enable us to support the phased introduction of key elements of the new arrangements, including the Pupil Profile, the Entitlement Framework and the development of co-operation and collaboration between schools and between schools and FE colleges.

Dilutional Hyponatraemia

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dilutional hyponatraemia-related deaths occurred in the Province in each of the last 20 years. [210022]

Angela Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for each year between 1984 and 2003, where

(i) the underlying cause of death was "hyponatraemia"[1] or "fluid overload"[2]; or

(ii) an associated/secondary cause of death was "hyponatraemia"[1] or "fluid overload"[2].

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code E87.1 for years 2001–03 and Ninth Revision code 276.1 for years 1984–2000.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code E87.7 for years 2001–03 and Ninth Revision code 276.6 for years 1984–2000.

Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland where the primary or an associated/secondary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"

Registration year	*Deaths where the primary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"*	*Deaths where an associated/secondary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"*
1984	0	0
1985	0	0
1986	0	1
1987	0	1
1988	1	1
1989	0	3
1990	1	1
1991	0	2
1992	0	2
1993	1	2
1994	0	0
1995	0	3
1996	1	4
1997	0	2
1998	0	2
1999	0	8

Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland where the primary or an associated/secondary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"

Registration year	*Deaths where the primary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"*	*Deaths where an associated/secondary cause of death was "hyponatraemia" or "fluid overload"*
2000	0	5
2001	0	0
2002	1	9
2003	1	9

Early Years Development Fund

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been spent on the Early Years Development Fund in each constituency in Northern Ireland in each year since its introduction. [211181]

Angela Smith: Information regarding allocations Early Years Development Fund (EYDF) broken down by parliamentary constituency is not available. EYDF provides a degree of infrastructural support to the Childcare Partnerships. The Department provides the Childcare Partnerships with a percentage allocation of the annual EYDF budget available, which can then be targeted to provide support for suitable projects/activities in the Partnership area. In addition, the Department also uses a portion of EYDF to support a range of diverse organisations and activities across Northern Ireland.

The following table shows the overall level of investment in the Early Years Development Fund at Northern Ireland and Childcare Partnership level since 1999.

£ million

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Northern Ireland	0.36	1.37	1.41	1.46	1.54	1.60
Eastern childcare partnership	0.19	0.39	0.38	0.39	0.41	0.45
Western childcare partnership	0.09	0.23	0.23	0.24	0.25	0.29
Northern childcare partnership	0.02	0.26	0.21	0.22	0.23	0.26
Southern childcare partnership	0.04	0.22	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.22

Economic Activity (East Londonderry)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public funding has been spent in each of the last three years on offering assistance to representatives of companies sited in the constituency of East Londonderry at the invitation of Invest Northern Ireland. [210930]

Mr. Gardiner: The following table provides information relating to offers made to clients within the East Londonderry parliamentary constituency area during the three years up to end March 2004. Included is the total amount of planned investment to which these offers contributed.

	Number of offers	*Assistance (£)*	*Planned investment (£)*
2001–02	44	2,006,291	6,984,996
2002–03	59	4,168,042	13,950,428
2003–04	116	5,515,632	10,952,580
Total	219	11,689,965	31,888,004

Invest NI data are provided for the most recent two years. Information for the year 2001–02 is based on the addition of funding provided by two of Invest NI's legacy agencies—the Industrial Development Board and the Local Enterprise Development Unit.

Influenza

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients in the Province have been diagnosed with influenza in each month over the past five years; how many have died from influenza in the Province in each of the last 20 years; and how many cases of each subtype of influenza were diagnosed in the Province since 1 November 2004. [210043]

Angela Smith: The information is as follows:

(i) Information on the number of patients diagnosed with influenza in each month over the last five years within the Province is detailed in the following table.

Month/year	*Number of influenza detections*
2000	
January	228
February	56
March	13
April	11
May	10
June	18
July	4
August	5
September	3
October	8
November	2
December	8
2001	
January	14
February	25
March	39
April	61
May	17
June	19
July	7
August	5
September	35
October	66
November	7
December	5
2002	
January	2
February	9
March	12
April	15
May	6
June	4
July	3
August	0
September	0

Month/year	*Number of influenza detections*
October	0
November	3
December	0
2003	
January	1
February	1
March	0
April	2
May	0
June	0
July	0
August	0
September	0
October	17
November	22
December	7
2004	
January	2
February	2
March	0
April	0
May	1
June	0
July	0
August	0
September	0
October	0
November	8
December	14

(ii) The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland for each year between 1984 and 2003, due to "influenza"[1]

Registration year	*"Influenza" deaths*
1984	15
1985	28
1986	23
1987	2
1988	9
1989	43
1990	48
1991	5
1992	6
1993	17
1994	3
1995	9
1996	6
1997	8
1998	2
1999	5
2000	39
2001	0
2002	1
2003	4

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes J10-J11 for years 2001–03 and Ninth Revision code 487 for years 1984–2000.

Source:

Northern Ireland Statistical Research Agency

(iii) Since 1 November 2004, there have been a total of 28 laboratory-confirmed influenza infections in Northern Ireland. All are influenza A: four have been typed as influenza A H3, 12 have been typed as influenza A HI. The remaining 12 viruses have not been sub-typed.

Juvenile Justice Centre

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* young people and *(b)* staff have been injured in the past (i) six and (ii) 12 months while using restraining methods at the Juvenile Justice Centre; and whether any review was carried out following each incident. [210942]

Mr. Spellar: This is an operational responsibility of the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland (Bill Lockhart). He has reported the figures in the table and advised me that the majority of the injuries can be classed as minor and includes red marks, bruises and superficial scratches.

	Number
Injuries in past 6 months (July to December 2004)	
Young people	27
Staff	21
Injuries in past 12 months (January to December 2004)	
Young people	44
Staff	28

Every incident involving the use of physical restraint is recorded in the appropriate log book and signed off by the Unit Manager or Duty Manager in his/her absence. These log books are subject to regular scrutiny by Senior Managers. Every incident of physical restraint is subject to review at the daily Information Meeting attended by Senior and Duty Managers.

National Assets

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library a list of assets held by *(a)* each Northern Ireland Department and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Office since publication of the National Assets Register; what the value of the asset at the time of the compilation of the register was; what its current value is; and in the case of assets acquired or disposed of since the publication of the register, what the acquisition or disposal price was in each case. [210641]

Mr. Pearson: The resource accounts for each Northern Ireland Department have been laid in the House and show, in summary form, the assets held together with the acquisitions and disposals during the year. It is intended to publish an updated version of the National Asset Register to inform the next spending review which is expected to be in 2006. Producing the information in the form requested would incur disproportionate cost.

Peace Funding

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money he has allocated towards core funding for the victims sector in Northern Ireland for the next financial year; and if he will make a statement. [210886]

Angela Smith: The current core funding scheme for victims and survivors groups, due to end on 31 March 2005, is to be extended for a further year until 31 March 2006 and core funded groups have recently been advised of this by the Intermediary Funding Body, the Community Relations Council. Approximately

£1.8 million will be allocated to cover this extended period enabling groups to continue their important work.

The existing scheme has been subject to an independent evaluation which is in the process of completion and its recommendations will inform future funding arrangements for the sector. In addition work by the Victims Unit of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister is in hand on the next phase of policy in relation to victims and survivors. This will be the subject of consultation and it is considered that an extension to the existing Scheme will allow everyone sufficient time, not only to respond to the consultation, but also to prepare for any new arrangements which may emerge.

Physiotherapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in each of the Province's health board areas are awaiting an initial assessment by a physiotherapist. [210027]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of individuals awaiting an initial assessment by a physiotherapist is not collected centrally. Waiting list information is not recorded by all Boards and is not recorded on a consistent basis by those Boards, which do collect the information. The information that Boards were able to provide in relation to the number of people waiting for an initial physiotherapist assessment is shown in the table.

Board	*Number waiting initial assessment appointment*
EHSSB	3,899
NHSSB	[1]3,183
SHSSB	n/a
WHSSB	[1]2,162

n/a = Non applicable.

[1] The information shown is for each Health and Social Services Board where data is available. All figures are as at 31 December 2004, except Causeway Health and Social Services Trust within the Northern Board area, which shows the position at: 30 November 2004 and Altnagelvin Health and Social Services Trust within the Western Board area, which shows the position at 1 December 2004.

Source:
Health and Social Services Boards

Information relating to Altnagelvin Health and Social Services Trust and Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust (WHSSB) is based on the number of people waiting for treatment, as opposed to waiting for initial assessment, by a physiotherapist, although in most cases assessment and treatment take place on the same day.

Southern Board area Trusts do not hold official waiting list figures, although in some Trusts this information is recorded by professional staff. Any data collected are held on manual systems and could only be provided at disproportionate cost due to the time that would be required to extract the information.

Planning Applications

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria the Planning Service in Northern Ireland uses in its consultation process with local councils regarding decisions on whether to discuss deferred planning applications *(a)* on site and *(b)* in office. [210345]

Angela Smith: The Planning Service does not apply any specific criteria when deciding whether a site or office meeting is required following deferral of an application for a meeting by a local council. Each request is considered on its particular merits.

Post-primary School Admissions Criteria

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to publish the consultation document on alternative admissions criteria to post-primary schools. [210770]

Mr. Gardiner: I will publish a consultation document on new admissions arrangements for post-primary schools on Friday 28 January. The document will include consideration of admissions criteria to be used by post-primary schools if they have more applications than places available.

This is an open consultation and everyone is invited to submit their views. The closing date for the consultation is 30 June 2005 and I will consider all of the views expressed in the consultation before decisions are taken on new admissions arrangements.

Public Sector Holiday

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he intends that 13 July should cease to be a public sector holiday in the Province. [210036]

Mr. Pearson: There are no plans to alter the observance of 13 July as a privilege holiday for the staff of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and also those staff of the Northern Ireland Office who are located in Northern Ireland.

While holidays for the staff in the wider public sector are a matter for the relevant employer, prior to December 2004, Health and Personal Social Services staff had 10 public holidays and two additional privilege days, historically taken on 13 July and a third day at Christmas. Under the UK-wide pay modernisation "Agenda for Change", implemented on 1 December 2004, the two additional privilege holidays were converted to annual leave for Health and Personal Social Services staff.

Sex Offenders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether the person convicted of a sexual offence and added to the Sex Offenders Register in the Republic of Ireland, whose name has been communicated to him, has been added to the Northern Ireland Sex Offenders Register since his release from HMP Magilligan in November 2004; [209044]

(2) for what reasons there has been a delay in the addition of the person convicted of a sexual offence and added to the Sex Offenders Register in the Republic of Ireland, whose name has been communicated to him, to the Northern Ireland Sex Offenders Register since the coming into force of the relevant provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2004. [209045]

Mr. Spellar: I understand that, on 30 November, the court, in the jurisdiction in which the person now resides, granted an order which made the person subject to the notification requirements of Part 2 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

While the person is not residing in Northern Ireland he is not required to notify his details to the PSNI.

Speech and Language Therapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in each of the Province's health board areas are awaiting an initial assessment by a speech and language therapist. [210033]

Angela Smith: Information on the number of individuals awaiting an initial assessment by a speech and language therapist is not collected centrally. Waiting list information is not recorded by all Boards and is not recorded on a consistent basis by those Boards, which do collect the information. The information that Boards were able to provide in relation to the number of people waiting for initial speech and language assessment is shown in the table.

Board	*Number waiting initial assessment appointment*
EHSSB	796
NHSSB	[1]807
SHSSB	n/a
WHSSB	394

n/a = Non applicable.

[1] The information shown is for each Health and Social Services Board where data is available. All figures are as at 31 December 2004, except Home first Health and Social Service Trust within the Northern Board area, which shows the position at 30 November 2004.

Information relating to Foyle Community Health and Social Services Trust and Sperrin Lakeland Health Social Service Trust (Western Health ad Social Services Board) is based on the number of people waiting for treatment, as opposed to waiting for initial assessment, by a speech therapist, although in most cases assessment and treatment take place on the same day.

Southern Health and Social Services Board area Trusts do not hold official waiting list figures, although in some Trusts this information is recorded by professional staff. Any data collected are held on manual systems and could only be provided at disproportionate cost due to the time that would be required to extract the information.

Sure Start

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent in Northern Ireland on the Sure Start Programme in each year since its introduction, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [211180]

Angela Smith: When Sure Start was introduced in July 2000, investment stood at £4 million full-year cost (£2 million in-year cost). Information regarding Sure Start allocations by parliamentary constituency is not available but the following table shows the overall investment in Sure Start at Northern Ireland and Childcare Partnership level since the programme was introduced in July 2000:

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Northern Ireland	2	5.8	6.6	8.5	8.8
Eastern childcare partnership	0.74	2.15	2.59	3.34	3.45
Western childcare partnership	0.44	1.28	1.40	1.80	1.90
Northern childcare partnership	0.42	1.22	1.33	1.72	1.77
Southern childcare partnership	0.40	1.16	1.27	1.64	1.69

Water Industry

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been paid to date to the European Commission as a result of the failure of Northern Ireland's Water Service to meet EC Water Directive standards. [208415]

Angela Smith: To date, no money has been paid out on fines.

If the Commission considers that there may be an infringement of EU law that warrants the opening of an infringement procedure under Article 226 of the EC treaty, it addresses a "Letter of Formal Notice" (first written warning) to the member state concerned, requesting it to submit its observation by a specified date, usually two months.

In light of the reply or absence of a reply from the member state concerned, the Commission may decide to address a "Reasoned Opinion" (final written warning) to the member state. This clearly and definitively sets out the reasons why it considers there to have been an infringement of EU law and calls upon the member state to comply within a specified period, normally two months.

If a member state fails to comply with the Reasoned Opinion, the Commission may decide to bring the case before the European Court of Justice. The Court can make a judgment confirming that the member state is in breach of its obligations. The member state must then take steps to comply with the judgment as soon as possible.

Once a judgment has been reached, the Commission may progress the case to Article 228 proceedings. This also involves "Letters of Formal Notice" and "Reasoned Opinion" stages. Article 228 also allows the Commission to ask the Court to impose a financial penalty on the member state concerned.

Youth Unemployment

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of young people in Northern Ireland were *(a)* unemployed and not in full-time education and *(b)* economically inactive and not in full-time education (i) at 31 March of each year since 1997 and (ii) for the most recent month for which figures are available. [210609]

Mr. Gardiner: The Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey (LFS) can provide the information requested, but only on a quarterly basis. Estimates for the spring quarters (March-May) from 1997 to 2004, along with the latest estimates from autumn (September-November) 2004 are provided in the following table.

Number and proportion of 16 to 24-year-olds, not in full-time education that are unemployed or economically inactive

	Unemployed		*Economically inactive*	
	Thousand	*Percentage of all*	*Thousand*	*Percentage of all*
March-May				
1997	11	5	23	11
1998	12	6	14	7
1999	11	5	15	7
2000	12	6	15	7
2001	12	6	15	7
2002	11	5	20	9
2003	12	6	17	8
2004	11	5	23	10
September-November				
2004	17	8	23	10

Source:
Labour Force Survey

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the Burmese army's commencement of construction in Northern Nyaunglebin District of Mon Township of a new camp using forced labour; [209751]

(2) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about the use of forced labour in the construction by the Burma army of four new camps in Nyaunglebin District, Western Karen State. [209771]

Mr. Alexander: We have not made representations to the State Peace and Development Council about these specific cases.

The Burmese Government have still to address the international community's concerns over the use of forced labour in Burma. We fully support the efforts of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other agencies to end permanently the use of forced labour. Our embassy is in close touch with the ILO office in Rangoon.

Burma's General System of Preferences trade privileges were suspended by the EC in 1997 in response to our concerns over forced labour in the country. Targeted restrictive measures against Burma have been steadily strengthened through the EU's Common Position, most recently in October 2004, to reflect the lack of progress on this and other issues.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will urge the Government of Burma to ensure that former prisoners, political activists and their families are not subjected to arbitrary detention, discrimination or harassment; [209752]

(2) if he will urge the Government of Burma to initiate a moratorium on the use of laws restricting the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, with particular reference to *(a)* the 1975 State Protection Law, *(b)* the 1950 Emergency Provisions Law, *(c)* the 1962 Printers and Publishers Law and [illegible] the 1908 Illegal Associations Law; [209760]

(3) if he will urge the Government of Burma *(a)* to consider an amnesty for all political prisoners and *(b)* to make public full information on all political detainees; [209763]

(4) if he will urge the Government of Burma immediately and unconditionally *(a)* to release all prisoners of conscience held on account of their peaceful exercise of the rights to freedom of association and expression and *(b)* not to penalise anyone for his or her peaceful exercise of those rights. [209764]

Mr. Alexander: We have highlighted our concerns over freedom of expression and assembly in Burma in successive UK and EU co-sponsored UN resolutions, most recently at the UN General Assembly on 23 December. These resolutions emphasise that the Burmese regime should fully respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of expression and association. We, and our international partners, have consistently called on the Burmese authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all detained or imprisoned political prisoners; I most recently did so in my statement of 30 November 2004. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/uk/policy/news/press-releases.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will urge the Government of Burma to allow all political prisoners to stay in prisons which are close to their families; [209753]

(2) if he will urge the Government of Burma to investigate all reports of deaths in custody; [209754]

(3) if he will urge the Government of Burma to ensure that punishments in prisons do not constitute torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment; [209755]

(4) if he will urge the Government of Burma to ensure that prisoners are *(a)* held in conditions which meet international standards, *(b)* provided with proper medical care on a timely basis and an adequate diet and *(c)* supplied with mosquito nets; [209756]

(5) if he will urge the Government of Burma to ensure that prisoners in every *(a)* prison, *(b)* labour camp and *(c)* other detention facility in Burma have (i) opportunities to socialise with one another and (ii) access to reading and writing materials of their choice; [209757]

(6) if he will urge the Government of Burma *(a)* to investigate all allegations of incommunicado detention and torture (i) in interrogation and (ii) in prison, *(b)* to take steps to bring those responsible to justice and *(c)* to take immediate steps to put an end to these practices; [209762]

(7) what discussions he has had with the Government of Burma about deaths in custody in Burma in 2004. [209767]

Mr. Alexander: We remain concerned about reported prison conditions in Burma and call on the Burmese regime to implement fully its international human rights obligations, including the humane treatment of prisoners.

We maintain that all prisoners should be held in accordance with international standards. There can be no excuse for the deliberate mistreatment or neglect of prisoners. Our embassy in Rangoon keeps in close contact with the International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International, which have been able to visit prisons in Burma, in order to monitor conditions in which prisoners are kept. We are fully supportive of their efforts to improve such conditions.

We regularly raise our concerns on human rights issues with the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November.

We fully support the efforts of UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro and urge the regime to co-operate fully with him and allow him to visit Burma. He has a crucial role to play, including in these areas.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will urge the Government of Burma to review all trials of political prisoners which have fallen short of appropriate international standards; [209758]

(2) if he will urge the Government of Burma to ensure that fair trial standards are upheld in political cases including *(a)* the right to legal counsel, *(b)* the right to presumption of innocence, *(c)* the right to a public trial, *(d)* the right to defend oneself and *(e)* the right to adequate time and resources to prepare a defence; [209759]

(3) if he will urge the Government of Burma *(a)* to ensure that juveniles are deprived of their liberty only as a last resort, *(b)* to guarantee that juveniles are not held in detention with adults and *(c)* to promote alternatives to judicial proceedings and institutional care where appropriate to the child's well-being; [209761]

(4) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about its misuse of detention and security legislation; [209769]

(5) what representations he has made to the Government of Burma about ensuring due process in trials of persons accused of subversive political activities. [209770]

Mr. Alexander: We believe that the Burmese justice system continues to fall short of international fair trial standards. Our concerns over human rights and the rule of law in Burma are well known and have regularly been made clear to the Burmese authorities, most recently when I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November.

We maintain that all prisoners should be tried fairly in accordance with international standards.

We fully support the efforts of UN special rapporteur for human rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro and urge the regime to co-operate fully with him and allow him to visit Burma. He has a crucial role to play, including in these areas.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether U Win Tin, imprisoned in Burma since 1989, has been released. [209765]

Mr. Alexander: As far as we are aware, U Win Tin remains in Insein Prison. We have repeatedly called on the Burmese regime to release immediately and unconditionally all political prisoners so as to allow them to play an active role in national reconciliation in Burma. We shall continue to do so. Their plight was most recently raised in December's UK co-sponsored UN General Assembly resolution. U Win Tin is on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) freedom of expression panel list of imprisoned journalists. His case was highlighted in the FCO's Annual Human Rights Report, launched last November.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent inquiries he has made of the Government of Burma about the health of *(a)* Soe Myint, *(b)* Lin Lin Tun, *(c)* Aye Myintthan and *(d)* Hnin May Aung, imprisoned in Burma for their activities in political opposition to the ruling military junta. [209766]

Mr. Alexander: We have not made representations about these particular cases.

I met the Burmese ambassador on 29 November and called for the release of all political prisoners in Burma. My statement on 30 November also called for the release of all political prisoners. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website: www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases.

We hold the Burmese regime responsible for the health of all political prisoners in Burma.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent actions by the military regime in Burma. [210582]

Mr. Alexander: We remain deeply concerned by developments in Burma in particular the news that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now formally detained under Section 10*(b)* of the State Protection Law and that her house arrest has been extended until November 2005.

We fully support the UN Secretary-General's statement of 16 December 2004 reminding the Burmese authorities of their responsibility to ensure Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's security and well-being.

The Burmese regime has committed itself

> "to build a modern, prosperous, democratic nation".

For this to happen, it is essential that the National Convention (to draw up a new constitution) which reconvenes on February 17 is an inclusive and transparent process, involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma. Without their participation, it lacks all credibility.

The UK remains committed to helping Burma achieve national reconciliation and we will respond positively to tangible progress.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated 29 November 2004, with regard to Mr. Sohail Khalil Dar. [209855]

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) replied today.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, dated *(a)* 8 December 2004 with regard to Mr. Majid Ali, *(b)* 29 November 2004 with regard to Mr. Z. Ali, *(c)* 15 November 2004 with regard to Gamul Alam and *(d)* 9 November 2004 with regard to S. Hameed. [209858]

Mr. Mullin: My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) replied to *(a)* today. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied to *(b)* on 17 January 2005, *(c)* on 7 December 2004 and *(d)* on 20 December 2004.

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter of 5 December 2004 from the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend East concerning Mrs. Musthasina Begum, wife of Mr. D. Miah, reference 77853. [211200]

Mr. Alexander: The hon. Member's letter was forwarded to UKvisas, the Department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, on 9 December for reply. A reply was sent on 25 January.

Diplomatic Bags

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the application of the Vienna Convention to the operation of the diplomatic bag service. [211303]

Mr. Alexander: Our diplomatic bag and its transit complies with Article 27 of the Vienna Convention. We have diplomatic service procedures in place to ensure compliance of the convention. These procedures are regularly reviewed in consultation with our legal, protocol and security advisers.

Equatorial Guinea

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* the UK Government and *(b)* UK banks are assisting the government of Equatorial Guinea with its investigation into the alleged coup attempt. [210072]

Mr. Mullin: The Equatorial Guinean Government have sought assistance from the British Government in relation to their investigations following the alleged attempted coup in March 2004. We have made clear that within the framework of UK law we will offer every assistance to help them bring to justice those who may have sought to overthrow a sovereign government. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has acted as a channel of communication between the Equatorial Guinean government and the Home Office in respect of the request for mutual legal assistance. It is now for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, on the basis of evidence provided, to decide whether to launch a domestic investigation and/or prosecution.

The British Government are not in a position to answer on behalf of private institutions.

Eritrea

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what benchmarks he measures progress in human rights dialogue with the Eritrea Government. [209704]

Mr. Mullin: We assess human rights dialogue with Eritrea, in partnership with EU colleagues, on a regular basis against the terms of the Cotonou Agreement.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207830]

Mr. Straw: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) gave him on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Georgia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Georgia concerning *(a)* attacks upon Baptist church buildings, including two attacks upon the church in the village of Kuchatani in October and December 2004, *(b)* threats to and intimidation of members of minority religious denominations in Georgia, including Baptists, Pentecostals, Lutherans and Catholics, *(c)* the Government's stance on according legal status to faiths other than the Georgian Orthodox Church and *(d)* permission for religious groups to build non-Orthodox places of worship. [211458]

Mr. Alexander: Our embassy in Tbilisi maintain a close interest in issues relating to freedom of religion in Georgia. We are aware that a draft amendment to the law has been submitted to enable the registration of non-orthodox faiths and that the Liberty Institute has lodged a suit with the Constitutional Court to remove the article in the existing law which prohibits the registration of non-orthodox faiths. We will continue to closely monitor the situation and keep in close touch with our EU, Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Council of Europe partners.

Parliamentary Questions

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when he will reply substantively to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Thurrock for named day answer on 16 December 2004, question 205526; [209187]

(2) when he will reply to question 205526, tabled by the hon. Member for Thurrock on 13 December 2004; what the reasons for the delay in replying are; and if he will make a statement. [211201]

Mr. Rammell: I apologise for the delay in replying, this is due in part to the need to consult a large number of overseas missions and partly due to errors by officials. I will reply shortly.

Proof of Death

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the review of the criteria necessary for proof of death abroad in exceptional circumstances following the Asian tsunami disaster will apply also to victims of other disasters. [210102]

Mr. Mullin *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The Government are carrying out a review of the response to the Asian tsunami disaster, to identify lessons that we can learn for dealing with other disasters. It would be wrong to pre-judge the conclusions of that review.

Sudan

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Sudan. [210585]

Mr. Mullin: We welcome the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) on 9 January. This offers the prospect of ending Africa's longest running civil war, and can pave the way for peace in the whole of Sudan, including Darfur. A challenging period of implementation, including drafting a new constitution and forming a government of national unity, now faces the parties. We stand ready to support them in doing so. The United Nations is currently preparing for the deployment of a Peace Support Operation in support of the CPA.

Peace talks between the Government of Sudan and the rebels in Darfur are expected to resume in Abuja in the next few weeks. We will continue to press both sides to engage in good faith to find a lasting solution to the conflict in Darfur.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Sudanese authorities on the reports of a combined attack by the Government of Sudan airforce and the Janjaweed militas upon the village of Hamada, in Southern Darfur, on 16 January. [211457]

Mr. Alexander: We have repeatedly made clear to the Government of Sudan and the rebels that they must respect the ceasefire and abide by the Abuja Protocols, including the Government's commitment to refrain from military overflights of Darfur.

The African Union is currently investigating the alleged Arab militia attack on the village of Hamadah. We await the result of its investigation.

Syria

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with the Syrian Government on Hezbollah and Hamas. [210699]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 26 January 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed these organisations with the Syrian Foreign Minister Shara'a on 18 October 2004 during his visit to London. During this and other discussions with the Syrian Government, we have urged Syria to use its influence with Hezbollah, Hamas and other groups such as Palestinian Islamic Jihad, to call on these groups to reject the use of violence.

UNHCR Staff (Nepal)

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the 2002 report by the Inspector General's Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) into alleged rape and child abuse by UNHCR staff in Nepal. [209719]

Mr. Alexander: The 2002 report made allegations of sexual abuse by 18 people, including 16 Bhutanese refugees and two Nepalese officials. None of the 18 worked for UNHCR. But three UNHCR staff were accused in the report of gross negligence for failing to respond adequately to the abuse. Following a rebuttal of these allegations by the three UNHCR staff as well as a legal analysis of the case, a final review in 2004 concluded that there had been no wrongdoing by UNHCR staff, that no instructions had been wilfully disregarded, and that the conduct of the staff did not justify disciplinary action. The Government take any such allegations very seriously. We welcome the steps UNHCR has taken since 2002 to review its staff code of conduct, reinforcing the need for a zero tolerance approach to sexual abuse.

Vietnam

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what steps are being taken to encourage the removal of the death penalty in Vietnam; [210523]

(2) what recent assessment has been made of the number of state executions in Vietnam; and if he will make a statement. [210525]

Mr. Alexander: The first EU-Vietnam Seminar on the Death Penalty, partly funded by the UK, took place in Hanoi on 24–26 November 2004. We are encouraged by Vietnamese willingness to enter into a dialogue on this issue and hope to build on this progress.

Total abolition of the death penalty is unlikely in the near future. But we welcome Vietnam's willingness to debate the issue, and to consider narrowing the use of the death penalty in the next two-three years.

We regret that the death penalty is still widely used in Vietnam. It has one of the highest rates of death sentences and executions. 29 different offences, including non-violent ones, are capital crimes. More than 60 people are believed to have been executed in 2003, double that of 2002. On 5 January 2004, the Prime Minister of Vietnam declared death penalty statistics "state secrets".

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance is being given to Vietnam to *(a)* strengthen the Civil Service and *(b)* eliminate corruption. [210524]

Mr. Alexander: Public administration reform and corruption are key areas for UK assistance to Vietnam.

The Department for International Development's (DFID) support to Vietnam is one of the fastest growing UK aid programmes in the world. DFID programme resources are projected to reach £55 million in 2005–06. This support includes helping the National Assembly to strengthen its oversight function. Recent results include the scrutiny of the draft Audit Law which has led to the State Audit department reporting to the National Assembly as opposed to the Government, and on-going revisions to the new law on anti-corruption. DFID is financing the Ministry of Planning and Investment's Inspectorate which has provided three pilot inspection reports to the Minister of Planning and Investment to review and take appropriate action. DFID also financed technical training in performance auditing for 30 people, and awareness training in planning and investment inspection for 140 officials.

DFID is contributing to a multi-donor effort to improve public financial management. This support has helped design a budgetary yearbook which will be made available to the public, and financed the recent public expenditure review which will be endorsed by the Government and made public at the end of January 2005. DFID is also supporting the introduction of a Treasury and Budget Management Information System to comply with international best practice in budget execution and reporting.

We took part in the Vietnam Consultative Group's (CG) main annual stock take on 1–2 December, together with representatives of the Government of Vietnam, donors, international agencies, international NGOs and the private sector. Corruption was one of the key challenges identified; and we welcome Vietnam's increasing openness in this respect.

This was the first such dialogue with donors. We will continue to support Vietnam's efforts to combat corruption and to strengthen its civil service.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights violations in Vietnam. [210526]

Mr. Alexander: The Vietnamese Government are well aware of the importance we attach to human rights. We raise our concerns over the human rights situation in Vietnam at every possible opportunity.

We have an increasingly open dialogue with the Vietnam Government on human rights issues. The EU-Vietnam Death Penalty Seminar that took place in Hanoi on 24–26 November 2004 is an example of increasing Vietnamese willingness to discuss human rights issues.

The regular EU-Vietnam human rights dialogue meetings, the latest of which was in December, help improve mutual understanding and identify areas for co-operation; we hope this will lead to concrete progress.

We will continue to press the Vietnamese Government to adhere to its international human rights obligations at every suitable opportunity.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

China (Cashmere Imports)

11. **Sir Archy Kirkwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps she plans to take to increase the level of monitoring of the importation of cashmere knitted garments from China. [211122]

Mr. Alexander: Surveillance licensing of EU imports from China on a range of textiles and clothing products, including cashmere knitted garments, was introduced by the EU and implemented by the UK on 1 January 2005.

Postal Services

12. **Ms Buck:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the standard of postal services in inner London. [211123]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Improving the quality of postal services throughout the country is an operational matter for the Royal Mail Board. I have been assured by Allan Leighton that this is the Board's top priority and Adam Crazier, Chief Executive of Royal Mail, has taken personal responsibility for this improvement.

Energy Supply

13. **Sir Nicholas Winterton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the UK's future energy generation capability. [211124]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government's assessment, prepared jointly with Ofgem and National Grid Transco, is set out in reports of the Joint Energy Security of Supply Working Group. The latest version was published in November 2004 and copies are in the House Library.

The Secretary of State will also report to Parliament on security of energy supply this year as required under section 172 of the Energy Act 2004.

Employment during Pregnancy

14. **Mrs. Curtis-Thomas:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research she has commissioned on pregnant women's experience of employment and employers' attitudes towards them during pregnancy. [211125]

Jacqui Smith: In 2001, DTI and DWP jointly commissioned a survey of new mothers and fathers to evaluate the provision, awareness, take-up, experiences and views of maternity and paternity rights and benefits in Britain. The mothers' survey explored how women who had worked as employees during pregnancy had been treated at work prior to taking maternity leave.

The report—Hudson et al, (2004), Maternity and Paternity Rights in Britain 2002: Survey of Parents, DWP Research Report No 131—is available at http:www.dwp.gov.uk/asd and has been placed in the Library.

The DTI is currently in the process of tendering for an interim survey of maternity and paternity rights, to be carried out in summer 2005. This survey will update the findings of the 2002 survey. Initial findings will be available in June 2005 and the final report in November 2005.

EU Structural Funds

15. **Mr. Moore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the future of European Union structural funds. [211126]

Mr. Alexander: The Government have already set out in great detail its position on the future of the Structural and Cohesion Funds. We put forward reform proposals in a consultation document of 2003 and confirmed the Government's approach in two written statements to Parliament on 17 September and 11 December 2003.

In short, the Government is proposing that the funds should in future be focused on the poorest EU member states. If our proposals are accepted, we have guaranteed to increase domestic spending on regional policy in the UK.

Avient

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry with regard to the recent statement by the National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines on Avient, how many *(a)* meetings, *(b)* telephone calls and *(c)* other types of communication took place between (i) the UK National Contact Point and (ii) other UK Government officials and Avient's representatives; on what dates each such communication took place; and whether Avient was allowed to comment on the statement before it was made public. [200493]

Mr. Alexander: Dialogue with the company is covered by the confidentiality provisions of the OECD Guidelines. Avient did see the statement in draft form before it was published and submitted some factual comments, a number of which were accepted.

Business Registrations (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have registered for VAT in Coventry, South in each year since 1997. [211110]

Nigel Griffiths: The latest official figures based on VAT registrations show 690 businesses being registered for VAT in Coventry in 2003, which is a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

VAT registrations in each calendar year in Coventry

	Number
1997	615
1998	640
1999	650
2000	620
2001	655
2002	595
2003	690

Note:

Data are not available for constituencies such as Coventry, South.

Concorde

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the benefit of maintaining an airworthy example of Concorde for research and development purposes; and if he will make a statement. [207124]

Jacqui Smith: Supersonic aircraft were not identified as a priority of the Aerospace Innovation and Growth Team.

No assessment has been made.

Energy Billing

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions Ofgem has had with energy suppliers on the *(a)* accuracy, *(b)* comprehensibility and *(c)* timeliness of their billing procedures. [210439]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: These are matters for the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). I understand that the Chairman of Ofgem will write to the hon. Member about the matters he has raised.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions her Department has had with Ofgem in relation to problems with energy bills. [210503]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: My Department has regular discussions with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) about a range of consumer issues, including billing. My officials are working with the industry, Ofgem and Energywatch on establishing industry- wide standards that address billing problems.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the percentage of *(a)* gas and *(b)* electricity bills sent out each year which are estimated bills. [210595]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Neither. OFGEM nor Energywatch routinely collects this information. The rules governing meter-readings are the responsibility of OFGEM. Gas and electricity suppliers are obliged to ensure that customers' meters are physically read and inspected once every two years, although suppliers will seek to read meters more frequently. Customers may provide their own meter readings instead of accepting an estimated bill. The supplier must accept that reading or arrange to read the meter itself.

EU Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1124W, on the EU constitution, whether such a legal basis exists within the European Communities treaties. [207140]

Mr. Alexander: Article III-122 of the proposed constitutional treaty would provide a legal basis for European laws defining the principles and conditions enabling services of general economic interest to fulfil their missions, without prejudice to the competence of member states, in compliance with the constitution, to provide, to commission and to fund such services. There is presently EC competence to legislate on services of general economic interest within the current European community treaty, for example, in Articles 71 and 80(2) (transport), 95 (internal market approximation measures) and 156 (trans-European networks). A measure under Article III-122 could deal with the principles and conditions referred to above across a range of services of general economic interest; to do this under the current European community treaty would require assembling sectoral legal bases or restricting the measure to approximation provisions. Any new law made under Article III-122 would be adopted on the basis of qualified majority voting and co-decision with the European Parliament. Article III-122 explicitly maintains the competence of member states in the key areas of providing, commissioning and funding services of general economic interest.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her Answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1124W, on the EU Constitution, what the definition is of services of general economic interest; and if she will make a statement on the effect of the provisions of the EU Constitutional Treaty on the competence of *(a)* member states and *(b)* the European Commission in respect of such services. [207284]

Mr. Alexander: There is neither a UK- nor EU- level legal definition of services of general economic interest (SGEIs), although the term "services of general economic interest" can be found in Articles 16 and 86 of the EC Treaty. However, the European Commission states in its White Paper on Services of General Interest (COM (2004) 374 final) that there is broad agreement that the term SGEIs "refers to services of an economic nature which the member states or the Community subject to specific public service obligations by virtue of a general interest criterion". In ECJ case C-179/90, the court said that SGEIs "were services which exhibited a general economic interest with special characteristics compared with those offered by other economic activities".

The EC Treaty presently gives the European Commission competence to bring forward proposals for EC legislation on SGEIs under sectoral legal bases, for example Articles 71 and 80(2) (transport) or 156 (trans-european networks), or under Article 95 (internal market approximation measures). Such proposals could define the principles and conditions enabling SGEIs to fulfil their missions. A Commission proposal for legislation on SGEIs would have to be compliant with the EC Treaty's provisions, such as internal market requirements, and could not infringe on member states' competence to provide, to commission and to fund these services.

The Constitutional Treaty would give the Commission an additional legal basis under which the Commission could bring forward a proposal for legislation on SGEIs at a horizontal level. However, a commission proposal on SGEIs under this legal base would also have to be compliant with the EC Treaty's provision, such as internal market requirements, and Article III-122 explicitly maintains the competence of member states in the key areas of providing, commissioning and funding services of general economic interest.

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what constraints apply to the requirement to promote scientific and technological advance as set out in Article I-3(3) of the proposed EU Constitution. [208252]

Ms Hewitt: The detailed provisions relating to this objective are contained in Articles III-248–255 of the Treaty. These largely reflect the existing EC competence in this area, with the addition of an explicit reference to space policy. The Article's set out the European Union's aim to achieve a European Research Area, improve the EU's competitiveness in science and technology and ensure EU policies are properly supported by research. They also outline a list of activities to support these aims. As with the rest of the Treaty, any action in this area is also subject to the application of the principles of proportionality and subsidiarity. In addition, any action would be subject to the constraints of the EU budget.

Fast Patrol Vessel Defender

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether grant funding, other than the European Regional Development Fund grant to the Maritime Defence Museum (Lowestoft) Ltd. for restoration of the Fast Patrol Vessel Defender, was provided by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the European Regional Development Fund for the acquisition, voyage, maintenance and use of the vessel. [207720]

Mr. Alexander: The only ERDF funding provided was the grant of £58,728 for the project to restore the vessel. There is no indication of Government funding having been provided to the Maritime Defence Museum (Lowestoft) Ltd.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to her answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 142W, on the Freedom of Information Act, whether private companies are protected from being compelled under the Act to divulge commercial-in-confidence information provided to them by public bodies; and under what circumstances the non-absolute exemption at section 43 can be invoked. [209550]

Jacqui Smith: The Freedom of Information Act applies to public authorities only, as listed in Schedule 1, specified in section 6, or designated under section 5 of the Act. No Orders have yet been made under section 5. The Department of Constitutional Affairs will shortly hold a public consultation on the scope and use of section 5.

Where a request is received for information which constitutes a trade, secret or the disclosure of which would prejudice, or be likely to. prejudice, the commercial interests of any person, and the balance of the public interest is in favour of maintaining the exemption, section 43 can be applied.

I am placing a copy of the Government's guidance on applying this exemption in the Library of the House.

Inward Investors

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what statutory obligations exist on inward investors to notify her Department of their intention to withdraw from the UK. [211111]

Nigel Griffiths: Companies, be they foreign or UK owned, have no statutory obligation to notify the Department of their plans to disinvest unless they have been the recipient of regional grant assistance.

Such companies are required to maintain the investment for a period of time after the assistance has been paid. If the project were to close within that time, the conditions of the offer require the grant recipient to inform my Department.

All offers of assistance contain provisions for withholding or recovery of grant if a firm withdraws from an investment.

Wave Power

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to promote wave power. [211119]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: On 2 August 2004 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced a £50 million Marine Renewables Deployment Fund that will provide continued support to wave and tidal stream power technologies.

This builds on the £15 million of support for Research and Development provided to the sector since 1999. My Department has also provided £1.2 million towards the European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney.

Additionally, the Carbon Trust has invested over £6 million in marine energy projects and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council has a £2.6 million Supergen Marine Programme.

Wind Farms

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the development of offshore wind farms. [211116]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK has some of the best wind resources in the world. It is important that these resources are properly utilised to ensure that the United Kingdom's targets for generating electricity from renewable energy sources can be met. The development of offshore wind farms can potentially provide a major contribution to those targets and the Government is committed to ensuring that the right framework is in place to enable projects to proceed where an assessment of their impacts indicates they are acceptable.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Publications

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many copies of the booklet "What the Pre-Budget Report Means for Scotland" have been produced; and at what cost. [210652]

Mrs. McGuire: H.M. Treasury produced 750 copies of the leaflet on "What the Pre-Budget Report Means for Scotland" at a cost of £264, or 35 pence each. The total cost for all the twelve regions and countries was £3,172.

Electronic Devices

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207686]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office does not maintain a central record of all the electronic devices in use. The information requested therefore could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207816]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207647]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Detailed records of newspapers and periodicals ordered by the Office each year are not held centrally: some publications may be cancelled and others added to the list.

The current list of publications to which the Office subscribes is as follows:

Newspapers

Aberdeen Press and Journal

Daily Express

Daily Mail

Daily Mirror

Daily Record

Daily Star
Daily Telegraph
Dundee Courier
Edinburgh Evening News
Evening Standard
Financial Times
Guardian
Herald
Independent
Independent on Sunday
Mail on Sunday
News of the World
Observer
Scotland on Sunday
Scotsman
Scottish Daily Mail
Sun
Sunday Express
Sunday Herald
Sunday Mail
Sunday Mirror
Sunday Observer
Sunday Post
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Times
Times
West Highland Free Press

Periodicals

New Statesman
PR Week
Press Gazette
Private Eye
Scottish Affairs
Scottish Field
Economist
Spectator
The Week

Since July 1999, the cost of newspapers, and periodicals purchased centrally by the Office was as follows:

	£
1999-2000[1]	9,096
2000-01	13,639
2001-02	12,968
2002-03	12,990
2003-04	12,556

[1] part year

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay grade. [206505]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1640W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207233]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

19. **Miss McIntosh**: To ask the Minister for Women what assessment she has made of progress towards equal pay for equal work for women. [211132]

Ms Hewitt: The pay gap is at its lowest ever, 14.4 per cent. Its causes are complex; so we asked the Women and Work Commission to investigate.

We promote voluntary pay reviews to progress equal pay for equal work. 45 per cent. of organisations have undertaken or are to undertake reviews, including all Government Departments; the largest employer—the NHS; and companies like Lloyds-TSB.

Women in Politics

20. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Minister for Women what steps she is taking to encourage women's representation in politics. [211133]

Ms Hewitt: In 2002 we introduced the Sex Discrimination (Election Candidates) Act allowing positive measures towards women's increased participation. I am proud to say that the Labour Party is taking every opportunity to increase the number of women standing for election for our party.

We now have 119 women MPs (94 of which are Labour). 29 per cent. of the Cabinet, 50 per cent. of AMs, and 40 per cent. of MSPs are women.

Maternity Allowance

21. **Mr. Rendel:** To ask the Minister for Women what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions regarding maternity allowance. [211134]

Jacqui Smith: I work closely with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

The Government's 10 year strategy for child care set out our intention to extend maternity allowance as well as statutory maternity pay and statutory adoption pay to 39 weeks from April 2007 and our goal of 12 months' paid maternity leave by the end of the next Parliament. We will be publishing a further paper on these and other proposals set out in the child care strategy shortly.

We will continue to work closely on this.

Equal Pay (Wirral, South)

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on relative rates of pay for women and men in Wirral, South. [211127]

Jacqui Smith: The median hourly wage for female workers residing in my hon. Friend's constituency is £8.80, 11 per cent. above the national female hourly wage.

The median hourly wage for male workers is £10.82, 2 per cent. above the national male hourly wage.

The gender pay gap for Wirral, South is 18.1 per cent. which is above the national 14.4 per cent.

Pension Equality

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Minister for Women what steps she is taking to promote pension equality for women. [211128]

Ms Hewitt: Two thirds of those benefiting from pension credit are women. For future pensioners, the state second pension extends second-tier pension rights for the first time to people with caring responsibilities and those on low earnings—the majority of whom are women.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Iraq

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Foreign Secretary about the protection of Iraqi heritage in *(a)* Babylon and *(b)* Baghdad. [210112]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* I have had a number of discussions with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, concerning the protection of Babylon and of Iraq's archaeological heritage in general.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what reports she has received on damage done to historic sites in Iraq. [210870]

Tessa Jowell: I have studied the report written by John Curtis of the British Museum and have been in regular contact with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office concerning the protection of Iraq's archaeological heritage.

Millennium Dome

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much financial support was provided to the Millennium Dome by the National Lottery in each year from 1997–98. [211138]

Estelle Morris: Grants were made by the Millennium Commission to the New Millennium Experience Company (NMEC) as follows.

	£ million
1997–98	449
1998–99	0
1999–2000	60
2000–01	119
2001–02	0
2002–03	0
2003–04	0
2004–05	[1]—

[1] -£24 million (unrequired funds decommitted from NMEC by Millennium Commission for use on other projects)

National Lottery

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the National Lottery board about their reasons for refusing grants to organisations engaged in *(a)* public safety and *(b)* search and rescue; and if she will make a statement. [211534]

Estelle Morris: I have had no such discussions. The distributing bodies for Lottery grants make their funding decisions independently of Government and consider each application on its own merits and against their published criteria. Rescue organisations are not precluded from receiving Lottery funding. 37 such organisations have received grants of nearly £1.8 million.

CABINET OFFICE

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210532]

Mr. Miliband: As my predecessors' answer of Wednesday 15 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 1148W, made clear, special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers. The detailed information required is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210554]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my predecessor on Wednesday 15 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 1148W. Special advisers are aware of the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers". For the period 31 March 2003 to 31 March 2004, no special advisers working in the Cabinet Office made speeches in their official capacity.

DEFENCE

BAE Systems

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contracts were entered into with BAE Systems at RAF Marham in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [209516]

Mr. Ingram: No contracts were awarded to BAE Systems during 2003 and 2004 specifically for the support of the Tornado fleet at RAF Marham.

Citizenship Applications

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Royal Navy sponsors applications from UK armed forces personnel from elsewhere in the Commonwealth who wish to apply for dual or full British citizenship. [208859]

Mr. Ingram: As a result of an internal Royal Navy nationality survey, commenced in 2002, it was established that for some serving Commonwealth personnel there was a job-related requirement for dual or full British citizenship. In the interest of the service and of their careers, a small number of Commonwealth personnel opted to apply for either dual or full British citizenship. For a limited period only, and on a case by case basis, the Royal Navy is sponsoring these applications through an agreed fast track scheme with the Home Office.

Defence Munitions Site

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of the housing sold at the Defence Munitions Dean site were sold to the existing occupants; and how many tenants did not choose to buy. [209546]

Mr. Caplin: Of the 35 Dean Hill houses, 18 were vacant with the remaining 17 being tenanted. Ten accepted the opportunity to buy and seven tenants chose not to.

These properties will be transferred to Testway Housing Association subject to their existing tenancies, with a stipulation that the tenancies are protected and provide security of tenure.

Eurocorps

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the classification level is of reports from UK liaison officers to Eurocorps pertaining to the viability of UK co-operation with Eurocorps; and whether such reports will be accessible under Freedom of Information rules. [207094]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom co-operates with Eurocorps as a NATO Graduated Readiness Force Headquarters which is offered to the Alliance by its sponsor nations (Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and Spain). Headquarters Eurocorps is currently in Afghanistan, providing the headquarters for the International Stabilisation and Assistance Force. The United Kingdom had a liaison team, led by a Colonel, with HQ Eurocorps from 2000 until March 2004, when the post was withdrawn following a review of our commitments to NATO HQs. The reports from liaison officers before that date vary in classification. All recorded information held by MOD is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We would consider on a case by case basis any requests for such information to be disclosed under the Act.

Iraq

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the estimates of Iraqi casualties contained in contact reports compiled by UK armed forces serving in Iraq since 20 March 2003. [209235]

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will release civilian casualty estimates contained in British military contact reports from Iraq. [209316]

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish Iraq casualty estimates contained in British military contact reports filed since the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. [209456]

Mr. Ingram: Between 1 May 2003 and 26 November 2004, Significant Incident reports and Significant Action reports indicate that United Kingdom forces in Iraq encountered a number of Iraqi casualties. The figures drawn from those reports are not an accurate estimate of Iraqi casualties, either those caused by UK forces or those caused by insurgent activities, and should not be taken as such. They apply only to casualties which were witnessed or discovered by UK forces, and give no indication of casualties outside the UK's areas of operations in South East Iraq, although they also cover the Black Watch deployment to the North Babil area in November 2004. UK forces are not always present at all incidents which result in Iraqi civilian casualties, and following hostile contacts they are not always able to make an accurate count of Iraqi casualties, either because they have withdrawn from the area, or because such casualties have been removed.

These reports indicate that 200 Iraqis believed to have been enemy combatants have died, and 80 have been injured, in incidents where military force was deliberately applied by UK forces. Five Iraqis believed not to have been enemy combatants have died, and a further 13 have been injured, in incidents during the course of which military force was deliberately applied by UK forces. These figures do not necessarily indicate that UK forces caused the casualties, but merely that they recorded them during the course of incidents in which deliberate military force was applied.

Reports indicate that 17 Iraqis believed to have been enemy combatants have died, and 22 have been injured, during the course of other incidents, 144 Iraqis believed not to have been enemy combatants have died, and 192 have been injured, during the course of other incidents. This includes the full range of incidents in which UK forces have been involved, or to which UK forces have been called, but where no deliberate military force was applied. This includes improvised explosive device attacks by insurgent forces on civilian targets, road traffic accidents and in one case the discovery in May 2003 of a mass grave, thought to date back to 1991, containing 32 dead. Iraqi Security Force casualties are not included.

These figures do not include the warfighting phase of Operation TELIC, prior to 1 May 2003, for which incident reports were not routinely submitted whenever casualties were discovered.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what mechanisms the Government are using to assess their responsibility towards Iraqi civilians under the Geneva conventions in the absence of a reliable estimate of Iraqi casualties. [209459]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom takes seriously its responsibilities and obligations under Geneva Conventions which identify civilians as "protected persons". The Ministry of Defence has not previously published estimates of civilian casualties because there are no reliable means of producing such estimates. There is no specific requirement under the Geneva Conventions to produce estimates of civilian casualties.

We take great care to ensure that civilians are protected and that our obligations under the Geneva Conventions are met. All personnel serving in Iraq are fully briefed on the Law of Armed Conflict and appropriate measures are taken to avoid loss of civilian life or property. We always evaluate planned operations to ensure that they do not carry an unacceptable risk of causing unintended civilian casualties.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons statistics on the numbers of Armed Service Personnel injured in action in Iraq each month were not collected before August 2004. [211024]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence statistics held centrally on personnel medically evacuated since the beginning of Operation Telic are not broken down into combat and non-combat injuries prior to August 2004. That information was only recorded by individual units, and it is not available in electronic format. The information that was collected centrally was clinical information, in the form of a database of all those medically evacuated, which does not provide a breakdown by cause.

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many formed units of UK forces are deployed outside the boundaries of the multi-national division (SE) in Iraq. [210378]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* There are no formed units of the United Kingdom forces deployed in Iraq outside the boundaries of the multinational division (south east).

Wounded British Soldiers

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* wounded in (i) Afghanistan and (ii) Iraq in the last 12 months. [210196]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 21 January 2005]:* Over the last 12 months, in Afghanistan one British soldier has been killed and 35 have been medically evacuated from theatre for health reasons (including injuries resulting from hostile action as well as from accidents, other incidents and illnesses).

In Iraq, over the last 12 months, the equivalent figures are 20 killed and 794 medically evacuated.

ADVOCATE-GENERAL

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Advocate-General what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by her Department in the last three years. [207821]

The Advocate-General: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Constitutional Affairs, on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

HEALTH

Adverse Drug Reactions

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will take steps to make it mandatory that doctors and nurses *(a)* ask their patients about suspected adverse drug reactions and *(b)* report suspected adverse drug reactions to the Medicine and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency and the Committee on Safety of Medicines. [210115]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The yellow card scheme is the United Kingdom system for collecting and monitoring information on suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) and currently relies on voluntary reporting of suspected ADRs by health care professionals. The independent review of the yellow card scheme, published in May 2004 considered whether reporting of suspected ADRs by health care professionals should be made mandatory.

There is no evidence from countries where reporting of suspected adverse reactions is mandatory that rates of reporting are higher. The independent review made no recommendation about mandatory reporting, but recommended that steps should be taken to strengthen the scheme and to raise awareness among health professionals and the public. Proposals are being developed to take this forward.

Patients may now report suspected adverse drug reactions directly to the committee on safety of medicines and/or the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency. My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health, the Lord Warner, announced on 17 January 2005 that two pilots (paper based and electronic reporting via www.yellowcard.gov.uk) to enable direct patient reporting have been launched.

It is good clinical practice that health care professionals discuss with patients the benefits and risks of medicines including the possibility of side effects. Patient information leaflets which accompany medicines encourage patients to discuss with their health care professional any side effects they have experienced while taking their medication.

Ambulance Response Times

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average response time was for ambulances in the East Kent Hospitals Trust area summoned to transfer patients to acute sites for *(a)* paediatric and *(b)* obstetric patients in the latest period for which figures are available; and how many obstetric patients in the area gave birth en route to an acute site in each quarter of (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [210370]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average response times of ambulance crews in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* the London borough of Havering, *(c)* Greater London, *(d)* Essex and *(e)* England were in each of the last seven years. [210592]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally in the format requested. Data on response times for Essex and London Ambulance Services and for all ambulance services in England is shown in the table.

Data is only available from the date trusts introduced call prioritisation. Essex Ambulance Service introduced call prioritisation in 1997–98 and London Ambulance Service in 2000–01. All ambulance services in England had introduced call prioritisation by 2001–02.

Further information can be found in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2003–04". A copy is available in the Library and at www.publications.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0411.htm

	Essex	*London*	*England*
Percentage of Category A calls responded within eight minutes			
1997–98	62.0	n/a	n/a
1998–99	61.8	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	61.8	n/a	n/a
2000–01	72.4	41.8	n/a
2001–02	78.1	57.2	70.8
2002–03	67.3	69.1	74.6
2003–04	75.7	76.0	75.7
Percentage of Category A calls responded within 14–19 minutes			
1997–98	98.1	n/a	n/a
1998–99	97.7	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	97.0	n/a	n/a
2000–01	97.8	83.3	n/a
2001–02	98.3	85.7	94.1
2002–03	96.8	88.6	94.6
2003–04	98.0	89.6	93.9
Percentage of category B/C calls responded within 14–19 minutes			
1997–98	97.1	n/a	n/a
1998–99	96.8	n/a	n/a
1999–2000	95.3	n/a	n/a
2000–01	95.6	79.7	n/a
2001–02	95.7	78.5	90.2
2002–03	91.9	79.2	89.6
2003–04	89.4	77.9	87.5
Percentage of urgent journeys with arrival time not more than 15 minutes late			
1997–98	96.8	79.3	[illegible]8.0
1998–99	95.2	69.4	84.0
1999–2000	95.8	61.0	80.5
2000–01	95.4	50.1	78.8
2001–02	93.8	48.4	78.5
2002–03	83.5	46.7	78.0
2003–04	92.6	50.0	78.1

n/a—not available

Anti-psychotic Drugs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescription items were dispensed in the community in England for *(a)* atypical, *(b)* traditional and *(c)* all anti-psychotic drugs in each (i) health authority and (ii) primary care trust in each year since 1999, broken down by age; and what the percentage change was (A) from year to year and (B) from 1999 to the last year for which figures are available. [208120]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the requested format.

Information on the number of prescription items for atypical, traditional and all anti-psychotic drugs dispensed in the community in each strategic health authority and primary care trust in England since 2001 has been placed in the Library. Data is not available for 1999 and 2000. The information has been broken down by age groups where possible and the year-on-year percentage changes recorded.

The information does not include prescriptions dispensed in hospitals or mental health trusts. Given that a large proportion of anti-psychotic medication is dispensed in hospitals and mental health trusts, this data should not be used to compare primary care trusts' prescribing practices.

Brazilian Beef

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations his Department has received on concerns about the effects on health of imported beef from Brazil. [210363]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* No representations have been received by the Department or the Food Standards Agency about the human health implications of imported beef from Brazil.

Cancelled Operations

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients at *(a)* West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust and *(b)* Addenbrookes hospital had their operations cancelled at the last minute in each of the last four years. [210694]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of cancelled operations for West Suffolk Hospitals National Health Service Trust and for Addenbrookes Hospital NHS Trust, now known as Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, are shown in the table.

Prior to 2001–02, the data was collected by health authority and is therefore not comparable.

Number of last minute cancellations of operations by trust

Trust	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Cambridge University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	624	645	769
West Suffolk Hospital NHS Trust	362	184	425

Cancer Treatment (Children)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* tumour and *(b)* leukaemia cases in children were treated in the NHS in each of the last eight years. [210214]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of finished in-year admission episodes for children (0–17) is shown in the table.

	Finished in-year admission episodes[1]	
	Leukaemia	*Tumour*
1996–97	18,122	52,716
1997–98	19,717	54,919
1998–99	22,228	57,960
1999–2000	21,726	57,740
2000–01	22,033	57,645
2001–02	21,961	58,169
2002–03	21,558	59,428
2003–04	20,707	58,930

[1] Finished in-year admissions:

A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Department of Health

Care Standards

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether an individual applying for approval under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 is required to undergo separate Criminal Records Bureau checks in respect of applications to different offices of the Care Standards Commission. [206639]

Dr. Ladyman: Where people who have already obtained a satisfactory Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure move to a new position which involves contact with adult service users, they are required to obtain another CRB check. Similar provisions apply in relation to working with children. The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) office which deals with relevant applications depends on the location of the service where the individual will work.

When an existing registered provider wants to open a similar service in another part of England, they will need to register this with the CSCI. This means that they will be subject to the registration regulations and as part of these requirements would require a new CRB check.

The way in which CRB applications are dealt with by the CSCI should be consistent across England.

Carers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the saving to public funds made as a result of the work of private carers. [211312]

Dr. Ladyman: This Government recognise the valuable and vital role played by the estimated 6,000,000 carers in the United Kingdom. The Government have made no estimate of the savings to public funds resulting from the activities of people who provide care on a voluntary basis.

Criminal Record Bureau Checks

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what system is in place for the transfer of Criminal Record Bureau checks on NHS employees between NHS organisations. [209031]

Mr. Hutton: Guidance is in place for the transfer of employee Criminal Record Bureau checks between national health service organisations. Detailed implementation issues are the responsibility of the NHS Employers Organisation, from which further information can be sought. Details of the organisation and its responsibilities are available from its website at www.nhsemployer.uk.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department expects to publish its review of patient dental charges. [204269]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are considering the report from Harry Cayton's Working Group and hope to publish it later this year as part of a consultation on the new charging system.

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his reply of 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 752W, on dentistry, if he will make a statement on the reasons evinced by the British Dental Association for not attending the meetings of 8 and 12 December 2004; and what follow-up action the Department plans to take. [207770]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The British Dental Association (BDA) has stressed the need to ensure that dental practices and primary care trusts (PCTs) have sufficient time to prepare for implementation of the new contractual arrangements. They have welcomed our decision that full implementation of the reforms will now take place to a longer time scale, with the new arrangements to be introduced no later than April 2006. Our new timetable will allow more dentists to move to new ways of working through the personal dental services scheme, enable public consultation on key aspects of the new contract and allow more time for PCTs to prepare for their new roles. If the BDA wishes, we would be happy to resume discussions with it within this new time scale.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1311W, on dentistry, how many dentists were on the register at 24 November 2004 including those who were not accepting any new patients for registration or occasional treatment. [208312]

Ms Winterton: On 24 November 2004, there were 19,840 dentists in the general and personal dental service. This is the number of dentists recorded by the Dental Practice Board as principal dentists in the general dental service on primary care trusts lists and their assistants and personal dental service dentists.

My reply to the hon. Member of 16 December referred to dental practices rather than individual dentists. The source was nhs.uk.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total costs to his Department of consultancy and professional services in each year since 1997. [200606]

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost to his Department was for the use of external consultants in each of the last two years. [200778]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Expenditure by the Department on external consultancy and professional services in each year since 1997 is shown in the following table.

£ million

Financial year	*Expenditure*
1996–97	14.699
1997–98	12.694
1998–99	7.332
1999–2000	8.132
2000–01	6.531
2001–02	6.800
2002–03	7.266
2003–04	10.031

Departmental Policy (Portsmouth, North)

Syd Rapson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Portsmouth, North constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Portsmouth, North constituency. [207973]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Portsmouth, North constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within Portsmouth City Primary Care Trust (PCT) has fallen to zero from 445 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Portsmouth City PCT has fallen to 61 from 1,320 in June 2002.

In 2003, at the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust, 86.2 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 96.8 per cent.

Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at the Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 140 to 261. The number of nurses increased from 1,517 in September 1997 to 2,116 in September 2003.

Figures for December 2004 show that 100 per cent. of patients within Portsmouth City PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days.

In the Portsmouth unitary authority area, death rates from cancer per 100,000 population have fallen from 221.22 in 1997 to 188.43 in 2002.

In the Portsmouth unitary authority area, death rates from coronary heart disease per 100,000 population have fallen from 164.84 in 1997 to 124.89 in 2002.

Portsmouth City PCT allocation has risen to £179.8 million for 2004–05, a cash increase of 9.5 per cent.

Depression

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were treated for depression in each of the last five years. [210216]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format.

The Department provides hospital episode statistics (HES) data which relates to diagnostic information for in-patients in national health service hospitals. During their course of treatment over a period of time, patients may have a number of episodes of care which are counted each time they have a stay in hospital. Information relating to diagnosis where a patient is still under the care of a hospital consultant is not recorded.

Information on the number of finished consultant episodes for patients with a primary diagnosis of depression or recurrent depression in each of the last five years in NHS hospitals in England is shown in the table.

The data excludes people treated on an outpatient basis and patients who have received treatment solely in primary care.

Finished consultant episodes (FCEs) for patients with a primary diagnosis of depression (F32), or recurrent depression (F33) broken down by age in NHS hospitals in England

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*[1]
Children (0 to 15)	260	210	240	250	280
Adolescents (16 to 18)	560	520	510	510	510
Adult	44,550	42,530	41,230	33,570	31,860
Not known	30	90	80	50	10
Total	45,400	43,360	42,060	34,380	32,650

[1] Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2002–03 and 2003–04, which have not yet been adjusted for shortfalls in data.

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

2. A FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. The figures do not represent the number of patients as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

3. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the HES dataset and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

Diamorphine

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners are licensed to prescribe diamorphine; and how many there were in 1997. [209618]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All general practitioners can prescribe diamorphine for pain relief. The number of registered general practitioners in 1997 was 29,389, compared to the latest available figure, for June 2004, which was 33,626. However, only doctors who hold a special licence issued by the Home Secretary may prescribe diamorphine for the treatment of drug addiction. As such prescribing is recognised as a highly specialised area of practice. Only a very small number of general practitioners, who work in the specialist area of drug dependency, hold such a licence.

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the overall costs of *(a)* supplying and *(b)* fitting digital hearing aids by (i) the NHS and (ii) independent providers. [210239]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike) today.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many digital hearing aids have been commissioned to be supplied and fitted by independent providers for NHS patients in the last year for which figures are available; and what the cost was. [210241]

Dr. Ladyman: The modernising hearing aid services (MHAS) programme estimates that, by March 2006, approximately 74,000 digital hearing aids will have been supplied and fitted by independent providers for national health service patients since 2003.

The costs of the service are commercially confidential, but are available from the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency for any NHS trust which wishes to take advantage of this initiative.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which areas of England are not yet covered by the Digital Hearing Aid Roll Out programme; when the programme will be completed; and if he will make a statement. [210963]

Dr. Ladyman: All areas will be covered by the end of March 2005. From April 2005, the 164 national health service audiology departments providing hearing aid services across England will be fitting digital hearing aids.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost to public funds of supplying and fitting digital hearing aids in *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* the private sector; and if he will make a statement. [210964]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department collects unit cost and activity data from all National Health Service providers in England each financial year.

This information is available in the document, in "Payment by Results, Core Tools, 2004", a copy of which is available in the Library.

Data from financial year 2002–03, the most current available, shows that:

> A total of 57,687 digital hearing aids were provided by NHS and primary care trusts at an average unit cost of £140 per aid.
>
> Total expenditure for this level of activity therefore equates to approximately £8.1 million.

No NHS organisation reported data for sub-contracting or directly commissioning this activity from non-NHS providers.

Dudley, North

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of his Department's policy since 1997 on the Dudley, North constituency. [210743]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government have put in place a programme of National health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Dudley constituency.

For example:

> At the end of June 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for inpatient treatment within the Dudley Beacon and Castle Primary Care Trust (PCT) has fallen to zero.
>
> At the end of June 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for Out-patient treatment within Dudley Beacon and Castle has fallen to zero.
>
> In September 2002, at the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, 85.5 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 96.1 per cent.
>
> Between September 1997 and June 2004, the number of consultants at the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust has increased from 84 to 105. Between September 1997 and September 2003, the number of nurses has increased from 1,087 to 1,112.
>
> Between September 2001 and June 2004, the number of general medical practitioners within Dudley Beacon and Castle PCT has increased from 59 to 60.
>
> Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Dudley Beacon and Castle PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a general practitioner within two working days and a primary care professional within one working day.
>
> Russell's Hall Hospital, part of the Dudley Group of Hospitals NHS Trust, is a new £160 million private finance initiative-funded hospital due to be opened later this year.

Elderly People

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people aged over *(a)* 90 and *(b)* 95 years are living in (i) residential and (ii) nursing homes. [211071]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* This information is not collected routinely. However, from the 2001 Census there were about 50,200 people aged 90 and over who were reported to be living in a residential home in England and 30,500 people reported living in a nursing home, including psychiatric homes.

Data is not available for the age group 95 and over.

Food Consumption

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average per capita consumption of *(a)* meat, *(b)* fish, *(c)* fruit, *(d)* vegetables and *(e)* confectionery has been in each year since 1990. [210844]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested on the average per capita consumption of meat, fish, fruit, vegetables and confectionery each year since 1990 is shown in the table. The data for 1990 to 2000 have been taken from the national food survey (NFS). The data for 2001–02 to 2002–03 have been taken from the expenditure and food survey (EFS), which replaced the NFS on 1 April 2001. These consumption data are based on household food purchases only and excludes foods eaten away from home.

United Kingdom household consumption[1] of meat, fish, fruit, vegetables and confectionery each year since 1990[2]

	Average consumption, grams per person per week						
Food group	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*
Meat[3]	999	995	983	994	982	986	990
Fish[4]	147	141	144	148	148	147	158
Fruit[5]	718	728	733	726	752	778	786
Vegetables (excluding potatoes)[6]	1,202	1,197	1,196	1,172	1,157	1,144	1,181
Potatoes[7]	1,154	1,118	1,095	1,084	1,031	1,021	1,042
Confectionery[8]	n/a	n/a	121	124	120	125	138

	Average consumption, grams per person per week					
Food group	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Meat[3]	983	985	961	1014	1,032	1,039
Fish[4]	149	148	146	144	157	154
Fruit[5]	813	806	800	839	809	852
Vegetables (excluding potatoes)[6]	1,186	1,152	1,160	1,141	1,080	1,088
Potatoes[7]	976	948	907	937	848	809
Confectionery[8]	134	131	126	151	128	127

n/a = data not available

[1] Consumption data based on household food purchases only—exclude food eaten out.

[2] Source of data: 1990 to 2000: NFS. 2001–02 to 2002–03: EPS. Data from the NFS have been adjusted to enable broad comparisons to be made with data from the EFS. However a break in the series in 2001–02 remains. This must be borne in mind when interpreting reported changes between the year 2000 (source: NFS) and the year 2001–02 (source: EFS).

[3] Includes all meat/poultry and meat/poultry products.

[4] Includes all fish and fish products.

[5] Includes fresh, canned, dried and frozen fruit. Excludes fruit juice.

[6] Includes fresh, canned, dried and frozen vegetables, pulses, vegetable based products/ready meals. Excludes vegetable juices/purees.

[7] Includes fresh potatoes and potato products (excluding crisps/savoury snacks).

[8] Data on confectionery not collected pre-1992. NB: Excludes confectionery eaten outside the home.

GP Contract

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for *(a)* negotiating and *(b)* concluding the general practitioner contract, including the time when a draft contract was made available to the general practitioner representatives. [209039]

Mr. Hutton: Negotiations on a new general medical services (GMS) contract began in October 2001 and concluded in February 2003 with the agreement of the profession to proceed with implementation. Phased implementation began from April 2003 and the standard GMS contract, that was to be entered into by primary care trusts and GMS providers from 1 April 2004, was first shared with lawyers of general practitioner representatives in October 2003.

GPs and Dentists

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* NHS dentists and *(b)* general practitioners were practising in the West Suffolk parliamentary constituency at 31 December (i) 2004 and (ii) 1997; and if he will make a statement. [210695]

Dr. Ladyman: The data for national health service dentists and general practitioners practicing in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire strategic health authority area and within Suffolk West primary care trust (PCT) area are shown in the two tables.

The data shown is for the number of GPs as at 30 June 2004, which is the latest data available, the December census has not yet been published. The data for GPs within the Suffolk West PCT area is from 2001 as this is the earliest data available.

Number (headcount)

Quarter 1	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers, registrars and locums)[1]			
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	1,263	1,302	1,477
Suffolk West PCT	n/a	124	159

Number (headcount)

Quarter 1	*1997*	*2001*	*2004*
General Dental Practitioners[2]			
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	754	901	1,025
Suffolk West PCT	75	98	110

[1] All practitioners (excluding registrars, retainers and locums) include general medical services unrestricted principals, personal medical services (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS others, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

GP data as at 1 October 1997, 30 September 2001 and 30 June 2004.

[2] The figures are based on the numbers of dentists with open general dental services (CDS) and personal dental services contracts. The dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have not been included in this analysis. The areas have been defined using practice postcodes within the PCT. The figures provide a snapshot of the number of individual dentists with an open contract at 31 December. A dentist with a GDS contract may provide as little or as much NHS treatment as he or she chooses. The Dental Practice Board has no information concerning the amount of time dedicated to NHS work by individual dentists. The figures provide an accurate figure taking into account any notifications received up to 22 January 2005. The Dental data as at 31 December each year.

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Dental Practice Board

Infection Control Training

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will establish infection control training as a mandatory core competency in undergraduate training for *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors. [208081]

Mr. Hutton: Curriculum content for undergraduate education and training for health care professionals is determined by higher education institutions (HEIs) in the light of recommendations of the relevant regulatory bodies. However, we share a commitment with those regulatory bodies that all health professionals are trained so that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality health service to all groups of the population with whom they deal, including infection control. HEIs are autonomous bodies and Ministers are precluded by legislation from intervening in their internal affairs, including curriculum content.

Healthcare Commission

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reason delays have occurred in appointing case managers to review health service complaints referred to the Healthcare Commission; how many such cases are outstanding; and if he will make a statement. [199936]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 29 November 2004]:* The Healthcare Commission took on its role in handling the independent review stage of the national health service complaints process at the end of July 2004. I understand from the chairman of the commission that since then it has received significantly more requests for independent review than planned for. The commission is therefore increasing its capacity to deal with the increased level of referrals. I understand that there are currently some 2,600 cases outstanding.

Hepatitis C

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding primary care trusts plan to devote to prison populations for the treatment of hepatitis C. [210248]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not held centrally.

Hospital Infections

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recommendations *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the National Patient Safety Agency has made to the NHS on hand infection control against the spread of norovirus. [209002]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Maintaining a high standard of hand hygiene is one of the key points in the guidelines produced on the "Management of hospital outbreaks of gastroenteritis" by the Public Health Laboratory Service, which is now part of the Health Protection Agency. These guidelines were published in the "Journal of Hospital Infection" in 2000. In February 2003, following high levels of norovirus activity, the Department reminded medical directors of national health service trusts about the guidelines.

The "cleanyourhands" campaign, developed by the National Patient Safety Agency, will help improve hand hygiene and hence will contribute to reducing the spread of gastroenteritis infections.

IT (Disciplinary Procedures)

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures following breaches of IT policy in each year since 1997. [205809]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following table provides information held by the Department's security unit from 1998–2004, which sets out the number of cases where disciplinary action was taken due to computer misuse within the whole of the Department. Information on official warnings is not available.

	Disciplinary action
1998	22
1999	22
2000	26
2001	4
2002	11
2003	9
2004	23
Total	117

The Department takes very seriously any misuse of its information technology (IT) systems. All staff are regularly reminded of the Department's misuse of IT with detailed guidance contained in the document "Acceptable Use of Information Technology" available on the Department's intranet.

Maternity Care

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many midwife-led maternity units have closed since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [210658]

(2) how many maternity units have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [210663]

Dr. Ladyman: Decisions about patterns of service delivery are a matter for individual health authorities and trusts to determine locally, taking into account local population needs, priorities and resources. We do not therefore collect information on this centrally.

However, the Government, in the maternity standard of the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity, published in September 2004, has set out its 10-year vision for maternity services. The standard advocates that national health service maternity care providers and primary care trusts, which will be at the centre of service delivery, should plan and provide maternity services based upon an up-to-date assessment of the needs of the local population and by involving service user groups.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many registered midwives there were in each year since 1996 by *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole-time equivalent. [209547]

Mr. Hutton: The Nursing and Midwifery Council holds information on the number of registered midwives. This information can be found at www.nmc-uk.org.

Mental Health

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the cost of winding up the Mind Out for Mental Health campaign; and what plans he has for establishing a follow-up campaign. [209800]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No costs were incurred were in winding up the Mind Out for Mental Health campaign.

The National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) launched a new five-year initiative on 11 October 2004 called "Shift" designed to tackle the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health issues. This new initiative is building on the work carried out under the Mind Out for Mental Health banner. In addition, NIMHE has commissioned a scoping review of what works in anti stigma and discrimination and is moving forward on the basis of a five-year strategic plan launched last June called "From Here To Equality".

MRSA

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 105W, on MRSA, how many of the babies who contracted MRSA in 2002 died from their infections. [209250]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The voluntary reporting scheme, used by the Health Protection Agency to provide the data previously given, is based on aggregated data and cannot be used to investigate the outcome.

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the progress towards developing a vaccine against methicillin resistant staphyloccus aureus; and what steps his Department is taking to support this work. [209929]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Reducing the risk of "Staphylococcus aureus" infection in those undergoing surgery would be of great benefit and an important step in preventing methicillin resistant "Staphyloccus aureus" infections. The Department is currently part-funding work through the national vaccine evaluation consortium on the use of a vaccine against "Staphylococcus aureus" prior to elective surgery.

NHS Bank

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much *(a)* the NHS bank has lent to each NHS organisation and *(b)* has been repaid in each year since the bank's inception. [209036]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS bank provides special assistance to support the most financially challenged strategic health authorities (SHAs). The amounts are shown in the table.

The amount allocated in 2002–03 is not repayable. The allocations in 2003–04 and 2004–05 are repayable, subject to abatements, as either capital or revenue beginning 2006–07. However, Kent and Medway SHA plans to make a repayment of £7.7 million from its capital allocations in this financial year.

Distribution of special assistance funding—2002–03 to 2004–05

£ million

SHA	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	25	0	0
Thames Valley	0	25	10
Kent and Medway	0	17	0
Surrey and Sussex	30	40	20
Avon, Gloucester and Wiltshire	45	70	40
Total	100	152	70

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the NHS bank is for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; what loans were made by the bank in 2004–05; and what loans are expected to be made in 2005–06. [210358]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The overall budget managed by the NHS bank on behalf of the Department in 2004–05 is £732 million. The budget for 2005–06 has not yet been agreed. The special assistance allocations in 2004–05 are shown in the table. The only special assistance allocation planned for 2005–06 is £20 million for Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority.

Distribution of special assistance funding 2004–05

Strategic health authority	*£ million 2004–05*
Thames Valley	10
Surrey and Sussex	20
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	40
Total	70

Health Services (Nottingham, North)

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made available in local health services in Nottingham North constituency since June 1997. [211017]

Dr. Ladyman: The following changes have been made available in local health services in Nottingham North constituency since June 1997.

Trent Strategic Health Authority (SHA)—Trent Access and Choice Pilot (TRAC):

Trent SHA is a pilot site for introducing choice ahead of national time scales.

TRAC is working with three general practitioner practices, including one in Nottingham. From July 2003, the pilots have been offering a choice to patients on the waiting list for cataract operations. Initially this is a choice of national health service trusts and agreements are being reached with local trusts to provide extra clinics on a trial basis for TRAC.

The cost of TRAC is as follows: £10.8 million in 2004–04 and £1.8 million in 2004–05. This covers all 19 primary care trusts (PCTs) in the Trent SHA area. Nottingham PCTs received £1,890,234 in 2003–04 and £541,000 in 2004–05.

Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham University Hospital NHS Trust:

Ear, nose and throat/ophthalmology unit opened in 2001 (£18.5 million).

Accident and emergency department expanded and modernised in 2003 (£6.3 million).

Maternity unit modernised and refurbished in 2003 (£1.45 million).

Patient advice and liaison service (PALS) set up in 2003 (£100,000).

PALS staffing (£74,500).

Simulation and clinical skills centre opened in 2004 (£2.48 million).

New acute medicine unit opened in December 2004, offering more efficient patient care in improved surroundings. (£1 million).

New magnetic resonance imaging scanner operational in 2004 (£1 million).

Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust:

Extension of cardiac surgery unit—extension of existing services in 1997 (£250,000).

New high dependency unit—new service—opened 2000 (£980,00).

Re-provision of the endoscopy unit—to existing service—opened in 2001 (£3.1 million).

New orthopaedic pre-operative assessment suite—new service—opened in 2002 (£500,000).

Re-provision of the breast unit, which opened in 2003 (£5.2 million).

Modernise and refurbishment of hospital laundry—opened in 2002 (£1 million).

Two cardiac catheter labs—one temporary—opened in 2002 and 2003 at a combined cost of £1.5 million.

Extension to the dialysis unit opened 2003 (£900,000).

Upgrade and expansion of the hospital kitchen opened in 2003 (just under £1 million).

New clinical haematology wards opened in 2003 (£1.8 million). New clinical haematology unit to replace and combine existing adult services located across two hospitals. Due to open January 2006 (£9.2 million).

Three linear accelerator machines (£850,000 each). Two were funded by the new opportunities fund money and the third by central funds. Two machines were replacements for existing facilities and one was an additional machine.

New coronary heart disease unit to replace existing facilities due to open July 2005 (£20.8 million).

New urology unit to replace existing facilities due to open July 2005 (£8.2 million).

Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust:

Demolition of Strelley Ward due to start at the beginning of February, and new build over the next few years will see the provision of new mental health services. This is a £20 million project due for completion in early 2009.

Broxtowe and Hucknall PCT:

Choice at the point of referral has been offered to patients for ophthalmology and orthopaedics since autumn 2004. Choice will be rolled out to other specialities over the course of 2005 in line with national targets.

In the autumn of 2004, a new community based echo service was launched (joint effort by four Greater Nottingham PCTs—Broxtowe and Hucknall PCT, Gedling PCT, Nottingham City PCT and Rushcliffe PCT).

June 2004, a pilot service began for patients who presented at hospital with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease—admissions are being prevented as early nurse assessments are leading to discharge and receipt of a community based pulmonary rehabilitation service.

Walk in Centre:

Nottingham walk-in centre opened in June 2000. (£1.2 million annual budget—includes all staffing, service provision costs, and patient care).

Dental Access Centre (DAC):

A DAC was opened in Nottingham City PCT in 2001. (This cost comes under the walk-in centre figure above).

Personal dental services (PDS)—field sites:

Two PDSs also opened in Nottingham in January 2004, at Broxtowe and Hucknall and Rushcliffe (£142,000). This cost includes a total of six pilot sites in Rushcliffe (£3,000 of modernisation agency funding for information technology).

Independent Sector Treatment Centre:

Based at Barlborough (junction 30 of the M1). An interim service is being provided from Bassetlaw and Ilkeston Hospital, which commenced in April 2004. The full service from the new facility is due to commence in May 2005. (£90 million over a five year contract period).

Pharmacy Information:

Since 1997–98, five pharmacies have opened in the Nottingham area (local information at this level is not available centrally).

Nurses (Neonatal Intensive Care)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many experienced nurses there were in the neonatal intensive care units in East Kent Hospitals Trust *(a)* on the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* 12 months prior to that date. [210367]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally. It is for local hospitals and health economies to decide how to deploy staff in ways that will best meet the needs of the population.

Nut Allergy

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what advice is given to primary care trusts on dealing with prevention and treatment of nut allergy; [210511]

(2) whether his Department is financing research into nut allergy. [210512]

Dr. Ladyman: The Medical Research Council is not currently funding any research specifically on nut allergy, although they are undertaking some more general research on allergy, which may be of some relevance.

Determining and meeting local health care needs is the responsibility of primary care trusts. However, we are committed to ensuring the national health service develops allergy services that offer high quality and personalised care to patients and will be drawing to their attention the Health Select Committee's report on the provision of allergy services and the Government's response.

Paediatric Nursing Staff (East Kent)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the ratio of trained paediatric nursing staff to patients is in hospitals in the East Kent Hospitals Trust *(a)* during the day and *(b)* during the night. [210371]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department collects information on the number of qualified paediatric nurses by individual trusts. The latest figures available for the number of qualified paediatric nurses at the East Kent Hospitals National Health Service Trust is shown in the table. It is not possible to determine the ratio of trained paediatric nursing staff to patients as the Department does not collect statistics on the number of patients seen.

NHS hospital and community health services: qualified paediatric nurses in the East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust as at 30 September 2003

		Headcount
RVV	East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	121

Source:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census

Patient Litigation

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) on behalf of how many patients legal action has been taken against *(a)* individuals and *(b)* institutions under the remit of his Department in (i) Romford, (ii) the London borough of Havering, (iii) Greater London, (iv) Essex and (v) England in each of the last seven years; [210594]

(2) how many patients have suffered from medical negligence by NHS staff in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* the London borough of Havering, *(c)* Greater London, *(d)* Essex and *(e)* England in each of the last seven years. [210596]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Health Service Litigation Authority (NHSLA) records the number of clinical negligence claims made against NHS institutions and bodies, which are vicariously liable for the negligent acts and omissions of their employees.

Table 1 shows the number of clinical negligence claims made in each year, from 1997–98 to 2003–04, in Romford, Havering, London, Essex and England.

Table 2 shows the number of clinical negligence claims in which damages were awarded for the same years and areas.

Table 1: Number of claims

	Notification year							
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Total*
Romford	39	26	34	41	28	38	38	244
Havering	39	26	34	41	31	38	40	249
London	518	661	777	755	834	811	727	5,083
Essex	114	122	115	146	145	149	150	941
England	4,116	5,043	5,410	5,903	6,249	5,834	4,946	37,501

Table 2: Claims where damages were awarded

	Notification year							
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Total*
Romford	16	16	22	16	14	15	2	102
Havering	16	16	22	16	14	15	2	102
London	259	329	363	353	352	261	150	2,067
Essex	53	57	59	74	66	54	43	406
England	1,852	2,130	2,329	2,394	2,380	1,666	922	13,673

Notes:

1. Information is not held on claims made against individuals outside of the NHSLA arrangements. For example, where individuals, such as general practitioners, are covered by private indemnity arrangements.
2. The NHSLA does not record whether non-clinical negligence claims are made by patients. Information can only be provided on the basis of claims by patients for clinical negligence.
3. Figures for Romford are for claims attributed to Harold Wood hospital and Old Church hospital. Figures for Havering are for claims attributed to Harold Wood Hospital, Old Church hospital and Havering primary care trust. Figures for Essex cover bodies and institutions under Essex Strategic Health Authority (SHA). Figures for London cover bodies and institutions under the five London SHAs. Figures for England cover all bodies and institutions in England.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the limits for exemption from prescription charges under the NHS low income scheme based on capital assets were last reviewed. [208124]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The capital assets limits for exemption from prescription charges and other health costs under the national health service low income scheme are based on the Department of Work and Pensions income support arrangements for people of all ages, except that limit which applies to people who live permanently in a care home. This limit is based on local authority care home charging arrangements.

The income support capital limits are kept under continual review. The capital limit amounts for those people under 60 have been unchanged since April 1988 and for those for people over aged 60 since April 2001.

The capital limit for people living permanently in a care home is reviewed annually and last changed in April 2004.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many prescription items were dispensed and paid for by the patient on a per item basis in England in 2003–04; [208125]

(2) how many prescription items were dispensed in England in 2003–04; [208127]

(3) what *(a)* the average cost per prescription item and *(b)* the dispensing fee in the NHS in England was in 2003–04. [208129]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the financial year 2003–04, 659.4 million prescription items were dispensed in the community in England. Of these, 58.5 million, were for patients who paid a charge at the point of dispensing.

The average net ingredient cost per prescription item in 2003–04 was £11.62. The dispensing fee is 96.4 pence.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total income from prescription charge pre-payment certificates in England was in 2003–04. [208126]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04 the total income from prescription charge pre-payment certificates in England was £62.4 million.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of requiring patients to pay a single prescription charge when their medical condition requires two or more medicines or treatments; and if he will estimate the cost in terms of *(a)* revenue foregone and *(b)* administrative costs incurred. [208128]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is not possible to estimate the cost of requiring patients to pay a single prescription charge when their medical condition requires two or more medicines or treatments, as information about the relevant medical conditions is not available.

It is possible to estimate the cost if patients were to only pay one prescription charge per prescription form (regardless of how many items are on the form). In 2003–04, it is estimated that the potential prescription charge income, if only one prescription charge per prescription form was incurred, would be around £290 million. This would mean a loss in prescription charge revenue of around £76 million, based on the current practice of a prescription charge being incurred for each prescription item on a form.

It is not possible to estimate the administrative costs incurred, because the necessary information is not separately identified.

School Nurses

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his Answer of 4 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1080W, to the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on school nurses, what information he collects on the recruitment and retention of school nurses; and whether he plans to set a baseline for numbers of school nurses. [209799]

Mr. Hutton: The Government collected information on the school nursing workforce in the September 2003 non-medical workforce census but this information was incomplete. Information on the number of school nurses employed in the national health service will be available from the September 2004 non-medical workforce census, expected to be published in March 2005.

We are providing new funding so that by 2010 every primary care trust (PCT) will be resourced to have at least one, full-time, year round, qualified school nurse working with each cluster or group of primary schools and the related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations. School nurses and their teams will be part of the wider health improvement workforce. Roll-out will start from 2006–07 in the 20 per cent., of PCTs with the worst health and deprivation indicators.

Secure Psychiatric Beds

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many secure psychiatric beds have been available in each of the last eight years. [210218]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the average daily number of available beds and their occupancy levels in secure mental illness wards in England in each of the last eight years is shown in the following table.

Average daily number of available and occupied beds, open overnight in secure mental illness wards in England

	Available beds	Occupied beds	Percentage of occupancy
1996–97	1,575	1,414	89.8
1997–98	1,921	1,566	81.5
1998–99	1,747	1,578	90.3
1999–2000	1,882	1,750	92.9
2001–02	1,848	1,699	92.0
2002–03	2,064	1,867	90.5
2003–04	2,557	2,368	92.6

Source:

Hospital Activity Statistics www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/

Smoking Ban

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the percentage of pubs in the *(a)* Northern region and *(b)* Tees Valley area which serve food which will cease to do so when the smoking ban is implemented. [201503]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In the White Paper we estimated that 10 to 30 per cent. of pubs in England might fall into the category of "do not prepare food". A regional breakdown of this figure has not been made. We believe that with food providing an increasing proportion of most pubs' turnovers, it is reasonable for the Government to proceed on the assumption that it makes good business sense for pub owners to continue to serve food. We will consult widely on this area in drawing up the detailed legislation.

Specialised Burns Unit

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has for the *(a)* budget, *(b)* location and *(c)* planned commencement of activities of the specialised burns services unit in the south west region; [209197]

(2) when the final decisions on a specialised burns services unit in the south west will be taken; [209198]

(3) what criteria his Department is using to determine the location of a specialist burns services unit in the south west; [209199]

(4) what plans he has for the reconfiguration of specialist burns services. [209200]

Mr. Hutton: The national burn care group, which is considering options for reconfiguration of specialist burns services across England and Wales, is being led by the national health service. Decisions have not yet been made regarding the development of burn care centres; any proposals for change will be submitted to a full public consultation process, probably in the summer of 2005.

Stourcare Call Centre (Paediatric Training)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the staff at the Stourcare Call Centre have paediatric training, broken down by *(a)* staff grade and *(b)* register grade. [210369]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1688W, on strategic health authorities, if he will publish the most recent in-year financial forecasts of all *(a)* strategic health authorities, *(b)* primary care trusts and *(c)* national health service trusts in England where this information is available locally. [208797]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not routinely collect information, which may form part of local reporting arrangements by individual organisations. In providing answers to parliamentary correspondence about specific organisations the Department may request the managing strategic health authority to provide this information where relevant.

Temporary Medical Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1329W, on temporary medical staff, what the figures are for each NHS trust for the equivalent period. [209090]

Mr. Hutton: Information relating to the total cost of temporary nurses, doctors and all staff in each national health service trust in England in each year since 1997 has been placed in the Library.

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans he has to monitor waiting times for follow-up appointments for patients following completion of their in-patient procedure; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the introduction of the maximum 18-week waiting target, as described in the NHS Improvement Plan, column 6268, paragraph 2.11, on waiting-times for follow-up appointments; [209634]

(2) what mechanisms he plans to use to monitor progress towards meeting the 18-week maximum waiting target by 2008, as described in the NHS Improvement Plan, column 6268, paragraph 2.11; [209635]

(3) what elements of the patient journey are monitored for the purposes of assessing waiting times; what plans he has to measure waiting times for diagnostic tests; and what plans he has to introduce monitoring for all other elements of the patient journey. [209636]

Mr. Hutton: The Department currently monitors waiting times from general practitioner referral to first out-patient appointment and from consultant referral to in-patient or day case treatment. However, by the end of 2008, waiting times will be measured from GP referral to start of treatment. This will include any necessary diagnostic tests or procedures.

Progress towards meeting the 18-week target from GP referral to start of treatment will be monitored against local delivery plans. Strategic health authorities and primary care trusts are currently developing their plans and these will be agreed with the Department in the spring.

There are no plans nationally to monitor waiting times for follow-up appointments after in-patient treatment. Trusts are expected to continue to offer follow up appointments as clinically appropriate.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 31 January 2005

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Solicitor-General what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by her Department in the last three years. [207812]

The Solicitor-General: I would refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 140W by the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210546]

Mr. Hain: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210552]

Mr. Hain: None.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Burundi

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development, what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* humanitarian and *(b)* security situation of Banyamulenge refugees in Burundi; and if he will make a statement. [211395]

Hilary Benn: DFID and other members of the international community are paying close attention to the situation of the Banyamulenge refugees in Burundi.

Through its spokesman, the Burundian army has stated publicly that recent threats against the Banyamulenge should be taken seriously and that it is taking additional measures to protect the Banyamulenge refugees living in Burundi. The UK, United Nations and international partners continue to remind the Burundi authorities of their responsibilities in this area.

There are around 3,000 refugees in official sites in Mwaro and Muyinga provinces. The UN Mission in Burundi (ONUB) has increased its patrols in the area where Banyamulenge are known to be living and will monitor protection arrangements efforts promised by the Burundi authorities. The United Nations Mission in Burundi (ONUB) Force Commander is in close contact with the commander of the Burundian First Military Region. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees is closely monitoring the situation in those camps and humanitarian assistance is being provided.

In addition, another 80 Banyamulenge families are living in a former transit site at Ngagara in Bujumbura town, living and working among the local community. Their security is the responsibility of the Burundi Government, but ONUB is also monitoring the situation closely.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the current drought in Kirundo Province in Burundi on the *(a)* economic and *(b)* humanitarian situation in (i) Busoni, (ii) Bugabira, (iii) Ntega, (iv) Kirundo and (v) Burundi as a whole; and if he will make a statement. [211396]

Hilary Benn: Cyclical periods of drought and cassava pest (manioc mosaic) are having an adverse impact on the availability of food and on households' capacity to produce food in the northern provinces of Burundi. The World Food Programme (WFP) has said it will assist 520,000 people in the provinces of Kirundo and Muyinga for the next two months. This month it delivered 1,485 metric tonnes of food aid to 176,000 people in the communes of Busoni, Bugabira and Kirundo.

Distribution of food aid and emergency agricultural inputs (seeds and tools) have been increased since July 2004, but these have had a limited impact because of poor rains, extremely low productivity of the land, reduced arable land by household and the poor health status of the population. The negative impact of these combined factors on food security and nutrition show the widespread and extreme fragility of an average Burundian household.

DFID has contributed £750,000 to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) through the UN Consolidated Appeal for emergency agriculture activities in an effort to improve the food security situation. The WFP has said it has enough funding for food aid for the next five months. We are concentrating our efforts on food security through the FAO and looking at other support in an effort to prevent a recurrence of the present situation.

Civil Society Challenge Fund

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the amounts paid over the last two years from the Civil Society Fund, broken down by *(a)* the recipient, *(b)* the country they are operating in and *(c)* the purpose of the grant. [211100]

Hilary Benn: For fiscal years 2002–03 and 2003–04, the Civil Society Challenge Fund (CSCF) funded 202 projects. Those projects were implemented and administered by 98 different United Kingdom Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

I have arranged for the document entitled "Projects funded under DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund—2002–03 and 2003–04" to be deposited in the Libraries of the House, which shows each of the individual projects together with the CSOs, the country in which they worked, the name of each project and the amounts spent by them on each project for the fiscal years 2002–03 and 2003–04.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make it his policy to give direct grants to Iraqi non-governmental organisations that operate in accordance with his Department's humanitarian objectives; and if he will make a statement. [211316]

Hilary Benn: The last 18 months has seen the formation of many new Iraqi Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) seeking to address and articulate the rights of ordinary Iraqis. CSOs include such bodies as non-governmental organisations, professional unions and associations, faith-based organisations, government and legislative bodies. With little history of independent civil society in Iraq, many of these CSOs lack capacity. DFID's Civil Society Fund (CSF), a two-year programme with a budget of £5 million, seeks to strengthen the capacity of Iraqi CSOs better to address the needs of poor, vulnerable and socially excluded groups, especially women and young people. Much of the fund is aimed at building links between Iraqi and international CSOs. However, direct funding for Iraqi CSOs is also available.

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 25W, on Iraq, if he will list the multilateral organisations to which the UK Government has contributed since April 2003; in what month each contribution was made; and how much was contributed to each organisation. [211830]

Hilary Benn: Since April 2003, monthly DFID expenditure to multilateral organisations for Iraq has been:

	Organisation	£
2003		
May	World Food Programme (WFP)	5,000,000
	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	7,035,000
	United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	7,000,000
	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)	750,000
June	Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)	1,500,000
	World Health Organisation (WHO)	5,000,000
	United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)	4,000,000
	United Nations Security Coordination Office (UNSECOORD)	100,000
July	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR)	400,000
August	UNSECOORD	500,000
	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	525,000
September	WFP	26,000,000
	UNICEF	6,835,187
November	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	5,116,312
2004		
January	UNSECOORD	3,000,000
February	United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	358,573
March	World Bank International Trust Fund	40,000,000
	United Nations International Trust Fund	30,000,000
	World Bank International Finance Corporation (IFC)	8,324,084
	UNDP	4,068,568
	United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)	500,000
December	IMF	262,500

Total since April 2003: £156,275,224.

In May 2003, DFID also contributed £16,000,000 to the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement for its work in Iraq.

Political Participation Fund

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the amounts paid over the last two years from the Political Participation Fund, indicating the recipient, the country they are operating in and the purpose of the grant in each case. [211101]

Hilary Benn: DFID's Political Participation Fund (PPF) for Iraq aims to maximise citizen participation and representation in the political process, particularly the poor and vulnerable. Following the signing of the contract with the project managers, the British Council, in August 2004, the PPF has so far committed £1.24 million to 29 projects.

The PPF provides funds to a wide range of Iraqi partners for political awareness and voter education programmes. Activities include journalist training, radio programmes, the production of posters and brochures, workshops, symposiums, seminars and research. I regret that I am unable to provide a list of the organisations receiving funding from the PPF, as known links between Iraqi organisations and DFID or the UK Government could inhibit their work or threaten their security.

Rapid Assessment Analysis Action Planning

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department plans to be involved in the implementation of the existing national plans of action resulting from the UNICEF-led Rapid Assessment Analysis Action Planning process. [211152]

Hilary Benn: At the Global Partners Forum on orphans and vulnerable children in Washington DC in December 2004, my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State announced how DFID would be meeting its spending target of at least £150 million on orphans and vulnerable children over the next three years. This included £38 million to be delivered through UNICEF for work in Africa.

DFID plans to work very closely with UNICEF to support elements of the Rapid Assessment Analysis Action Planning Process (RAAAP) plans in some of the countries in Africa which are most affected by AIDS—this includes six Southern African countries: Angola, Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia, Lesotho and South Africa under a regional programme estimated at £18 million over three years, and in a separate programme of support in Zimbabwe.

The support DFID provides will be based upon the UNICEF Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS, which aims to: strengthen families' ability to cope, through such things as financial credits, child care and developing skills; start and support community-based responses, largely through involving local leaders; ensure that vulnerable children have access to essential services, such as education and health care; ensure that governments protect the children that are the most vulnerable; and, finally, raise awareness to create an environment that understands and supports those children.

DFID is also planning to work with UNICEF and provide assistance to strengthen the capacity and competence of UNICEF's Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO). This is in order that RAAAP plans can be built into wider planning and implementation processes and interventions are based on firm evidence about their effectiveness. We are also developing a programme of support to UNICEF in New York so that they can provide global oversight and develop country commitment and the means to monitor and track the international response to meeting the needs of vulnerable children.

We are working though our bilateral programmes in DFID's target countries in Africa, with Government, and civil society organisations to address the needs of vulnerable children. Where countries have their own Poverty Reduction Strategies, DFID is pressing for "children and AIDS" issues to be included in budget planning, allocation and expenditure. This is being done in close consultation with UNICEF.

Rwanda

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether it is his Department's policy to continue adherence to the Memorandum of Understanding signed with Rwanda with the intention of providing long-term stable funding to support Rwanda's development and recovery from genocide. [213100]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government are Rwanda's major bilateral development partner. Our relationship with the Government of Rwanda is based on the UK/Rwanda Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which provides a basis for dialogue and assessment of progress.

The MoU describes the Government of Rwanda's commitments to the Rwandan people on poverty reduction, promoting regional stability, creating a democratic and inclusive state, and progressively securing human rights, and confirms that the UK's support depends on continuing, specific progress in these areas.

The MoU also describes the UK's commitments to the Government of Rwanda, in particular their commitment to reducing poverty in Rwanda through predictable, flexible support over the long-term and to continue to develop the UK's engagement in a transparent and inclusive manner. UK development assistance allocated to Rwanda is £42 million in 2004–05, rising to £46 million in 2005–06.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development with which non-governmental organisation his Department is working to provide relief and reconstruction to tsunami victims in Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement. [211300]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development's humanitarian response to the tsunami disaster in Sri Lanka has been channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross movement, and non-governmental organisations and in direct in-kind interventions aimed at addressing immediate needs. DFID is providing financial support to five NGOs: Save the Children Fund UK, HelpAge International, World Vision UK, Basic Needs and ZOA Refugee Care. We are also considering proposals from 12 other NGOs regarding transitional shelter, water and sanitation and livelihoods support. The assistance that DFID has provided, and is supporting, is geographically spread throughout the country. This includes substantial support to Tamil communities in proportion to needs across the country.

DFID's focus for longer-term reconstruction in Sri Lanka is likely to be on providing support to the rebuilding of livelihoods and services for poor people in affected regions. The Sri Lankan Government are putting together a needs assessment with the support of the World Bank and others and DFID will consider how we can best channel our support when we receive the completed assessments.

Tsunami Relief

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what representations he has received about the cost of transporting food to the Asian disaster zone; and delays in its despatch. [210505]

Hilary Benn: I have received no representations on the cost of transporting food to the Asian disaster zone, nor have I heard reports to suggest wide-scale problems relating to food availability in the region, but DFID continues to monitor the situation closely to ensure appropriate coverage in meeting clearly identified needs. DFID is maintaining close contact with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) on these issues. Non-governmental organisations have commented that the WFP has done a very good job at short notice in distributing food but are concerned about medium-term implications of distributing large quantities of food. DFID will remain in contact with the WFP on discussions about potential longer-term food aid requirements to ensure these are both appropriate and cost effective.

DFID has provided £3.5 million to the WFP's Emergency and Special Operations for food distributions in Sri Lanka and Indonesia and in support of their regional logistics role. In addition, DFID has provided £600,000 to the Food and Agriculture Organisation and our support to Christian Aid, Help Age International, Save the Children Fund and World Vision each contain food assistance as part of their relief programmes.

Ugandan Refugees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will estimate the number of *(a)* internally displaced people in Uganda and *(b)* refugees from Uganda in neighbouring countries; what assessment his Department has made of the (i) amount and (ii) nature of the humanitarian assistance dedicated to these individuals; how these humanitarian efforts have changed since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [210715]

Hilary Benn: The number of displaced people in Uganda in 1997 was approximately 400,000. Currently, there are 1.6 million internally displaced people. The number of Ugandans living as refugees in neighbouring countries in 1997 was 296,700. Up-to-date figures are not currently available, but are known to be far less. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner in Geneva is working on its detailed 2004 Statistical Report, which should be made available publicly later this year.

It is not possible to provide accurate figures for overall humanitarian assistance to displaced people in Uganda in 1997. In 2004 humanitarian assistance for displaced people in Uganda was approximately £81 million, aimed principally at meeting basic needs. Information is not held about the proportion or nature of humanitarian assistance provided to Ugandans living as refugees in neighbouring countries, as the provision of this assistance is not determined by ethnicity.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what his strategy is for assisting the Zimbabwean veterans who served in the Second World War for pre-Zimbabwe organisations and their widows; and if he will make a statement; [210983]

(2) what recent meetings he has held with *(a)* ZANE and *(b)* others concerning service veterans, and their widows, living in Zimbabwe. [210984]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

Our Consul in Harare provides advice and assistance to British citizens in Zimbabwe including veterans and their widows. He recently met representatives of Zimbabwe A National Emergency (ZANE) to discuss the situation facing veterans in Zimbabwe. We sympathise with the suffering of veterans and widows who are Zimbabwean citizens. But it is incumbent on the Government of Zimbabwe to provide for their welfare. We continue to press the Government of Zimbabwe to provide for the welfare of its citizens.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Mid-term Review

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will make an announcement on the conclusions of the mid-term review with reference to *(a)* permanent pasture, *(b)* the 10-month rule, *(c)* entry and higher level agri-environment schemes and *(d)* three metre margins. [211077]

Alun Michael: All the main policy decisions on the single payment scheme have now been announced. In support of this, six scheme brochures containing details about the scheme have been published. Furthermore, a detailed explanatory booklet of all the relevant scheme rules is currently being prepared and will be discussed with stakeholders during its development.

Following Commission approval of proposals on a new Environmental Stewardship Scheme, officials are currently preparing a statutory instrument to lay before the House. The intention is to distribute an information leaflet to all farmers with holdings of over 10 hectares during February with a view to launching the scheme in March.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the outcome was of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 January; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [211477]

Margaret Beckett: I represented the United Kingdom at a meeting of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Brussels on 24 January 2005.

It being the first Council of their Presidency, Luxembourg presented their work programme for the next six months. Among their top priorities would be to reach agreement on the new Rural Development Regulation and to progress work on reform of the sugar regime. They also hoped to take forward work on rice, wine, tobacco, bananas, potato starch, organic farming, risk management for agriculture, international forestry and timber imports, avian influenza, aquatic animal diseases, chicken welfare, control of TSEs, potato nematode disease, Mediterranean fisheries and the EU Fisheries Fund.

The Commission set out its plans for assisting the reconstruction of the fisheries industry in those countries affected by the tsunami and for the co-ordination of EU and member state initiatives in this sector. This would include Council legislation enabling decommissioned EU fishing vessels to be sent to the affected countries. I expressed support for the Commission approach, explained what action Britain had been taking and urged the Commission to speed up the adoption of the new Generalised System of Preferences scheme and to improve the rules of origin to help the affected countries export to the EU more effectively.

Under any other business, Latvia and Sweden requested Community financial support following storms at the beginning of the month which had caused extensive damage to the forestry and agriculture sectors. Estonia, Lithuania and Denmark said they might also seek funding. The Commission would examine actions to help through EU programmes.

Austria and Greece, supported by a number of other member states, called for assistance in exporting cereal and maize surpluses where bumper crops had led to storage problems and low prices. The Commission drew attention to action already taken on exports but would consider further intervention action.

In response to a request from Poland, the Commission said it would keep up the pressure on Russia to speed up its inspection of EU export establishments for animal products in order to enable trade to re-start. It would also address problems created by Russia's insistence that export certification for plant and animal products be done at EU not member state level.

After the Council, I attended a presentation by ministers from African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and Least Developed Countries on the impacts of EU sugar reform for their economies. The meeting was attended by the three Commissioners with responsibility for agriculture, trade and development who drew attention to their work on an action plan to address the potential negative impact of reform on those developing countries which currently enjoyed preferential access to the EU market. None of the member states intervened.

Agriculture, Environment and Biotechnology Commission

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Agriculture, Environment and Biotechnology Commission will be disbanded; and what regulatory and other powers will be moved to which other organisations. [211046]

Mr. Morley: The recommendations made in the report on the Organisational and Performance Review of the Agriculture and Environment Biotechnology Commission (AEBC) are currently being considered by Defra, the Office of Science and Technology, the Scottish Executive, the National Assembly for Wales and, in Northern Ireland, the Department of Environment and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. No final decisions have yet been made, although the Commission has agreed to complete its current work programme in April 2005.

The AEBC has no regulatory or other powers. Its remit has been to provide the UK Government and Devolved Administrations with independent strategic advice on developments in biotechnology and their implications for agriculture and the environment.

Apiculture

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she has given consideration to banning imports of bees to the UK *(a)* generally and *(b)* from countries with an identified problem with small hive beetle; and if she will make a statement. [210627]

Alun Michael: A total ban on imports of bees would be inconsistent with our obligations under the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures. Imports of bees into the European Union are not permitted unless the exporting country's authorities can certify that their bee health controls are equivalent to those of the EU and that the consignment has been checked for pests and diseases including small hive beetle.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the beekeepers' associations regarding the threat posed to native bee colonies by the small hive beetle. [210628]

Alun Michael: Defra officials met representatives of the national beekeeping associations in the UK on 26 November. The discussions included consideration of the threat posed by the small hive beetle.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to safeguard UK bee colonies from infestation by the small hive beetle. [210629]

Alun Michael: Defra officials and the National Bee Unit have worked closely with the European Commission to extend EU import controls to cover the small hive beetle. The unit has been providing advice to beekeepers as part of its extension programme and is developing contingency measures to manage any future outbreak.

Arrangements for bee health matters in Scotland are the responsibility of the Scottish Executive.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with other EU members regarding the outbreak of small hive beetle in Portugal. [210630]

Alun Michael: Defra officials have maintained regular contact with the European Commission following the finding last October of small hive beetle larvae in a consignment of bees imported into Portugal. The issue was discussed by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health on 11–12 October and 11 November, and at a Commission meeting of bee experts from the UK, Germany and Italy on

9 November in the context of developing a bee disease Chapter about the pest for the World Organisation for Animal Health.

Tsunami

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions has she had with *(a)* non-governmental organisations and *(b)* national governments on assistance for animal welfare measures following the recent tsunami. [211725]

Mr. Bradshaw: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not held any discussions with NGOs or national governments on assistance for animal welfare measures following the tsunami.

Bovine TB

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to publish the findings from the Krebs trials; and if she will make a statement. [211169]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) has advised that the Randomised Badger Culling Trial should be complete in the first half of 2006. The ISG will share the initial findings from its analysis of the effect of the proactive treatment with Defra shortly thereafter. A final report will be published once full analysis of the data has been carried out. This is likely to be early in 2007.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to demonstrate to *(a)* EU members and *(b)* G8 members that tackling climate change need not have a detrimental economic impact. [210975]

Mr. Morley: The EU as a whole is currently investigating the economic implications of tackling climate change; the Commission will shortly publish a cost-benefit analysis which member states will use to help formulate our long-term strategy.

Between 1990 and 2003 the UK economy grew by 36 per cent. while emissions of all greenhouse gases fell by around 14 per cent. and as part of our Energy White Paper an analysis was undertaken showing that reductions in carbon dioxide of 60 per cent. by 2050 need not have a major impact on economic growth.

Keeping the cost manageable depends on the steady introduction of measures, starting from now, which is why the UK has a long-term policy. We share this experience with our G8 partners and other member states on a regular basis.

Community Energy

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals have written to her Department supporting the continuation of the Community Energy programme. [205248]

Mr. Morley: We have received 22 letters supporting continuation of the programme from parliamentarians. A further dozen letters were recorded from other organisations and individuals: Mayor of London; Southwark council; XCO_2; DWP Harvesting and Marketing; Birmingham council; LGA Environment Board; CIBSE's CHP Group; Highland Council; P. North; R. Rippengal; G. V. Gilliam and N. Bolger.

Drinking Water

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the cost of removing *(a)* pesticides and *(b)* nitrates from drinking water supplies for each year since 2000. [210266]

Mr. Morley: The cost of removing pesticides and nitrates from drinking water supplies is not available on an annual basis. Water companies reported to Ofwat that they incurred capital expenditure of £18 million for pesticide treatment and £36 million for nitrate treatment in order to meet the respective drinking water quality standards during the period April 2000 to March 2004.

Energy Crops Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers participated during the reference period of the Energy Crops Scheme; and what the total payment was. [207309]

Alun Michael: Grants totalling £1.2 million have been paid to date under the Energy Crops Scheme since it was launched in 2000. Funding has been approved for: 56 individual farmers to plant energy crops; and for three producer groups (comprising a total of 53 farmers) to be set up to supply energy crops to end-users. A further 91 applications for planting grants, totalling £1.4 million, are currently being assessed.

Environment Council

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the Government's priorities for the Environment Council will be during the United Kingdom's Presidency of the European Union; and if she will make a statement. [209552]

Mr. Morley: The issues the Environment Council will be working on during the United Kingdom presidency of the European Union are contained in the 2004–06 Multiannual Strategic Programme and the Luxembourg-UK Annual Operating Programme for 2005, copies of which are available in the Library of the House. We will seek to maintain progress on the range of business covered in these plans, in the light of where matters stand at the end of the Luxembourg presidency. However, we expect the following to be included in this business.

The Prime Minister has made it clear that climate change is a priority for both our G8 and EU presidencies, and we will maintain momentum towards establishing mid and longer-term strategies and targets, and seek to ensure that the EU can demonstrate progress towards its Kyoto commitments. We will take forward any Commission proposals to incorporate aviation into the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

The Government will invest major efforts in progressing the REACH (Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals) Regulation based on an effective balance between economic, social and environmental considerations.

The UK presidency will take forward work on those thematic strategies in the framework of the Sixth Community Environmental Action Programme that have been published by the European Commission in time for the UK presidency.

The Government will take follow-up action to the spring European Council's review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, and will provide environmental input to the 2006 review. We will apply the principles of better regulation by proceeding with proposals that have been through proper economic, social and environmental impact assessment, and seek to build on the Cardiff integration process at the level of individual policies.

In 2005 momentum will be maintained on the regulation on a financial instrument for the environment (LIFE+) and on the INSPIRE directive which aims to put in place infrastructures for the prevention and better management of potential environmental risk. Concerning nature and biodiversity, we will take forward work on biodiversity action, depending on the timely submission of proposals from the European Commission, and on the directive on humane trapping standards.

Work will also continue on: the bathing waters directive; the sulphur content of marine fuels; a Pollutant Release and Transfer Register; priority substances and emissions control; protection of ground water; waste shipments; the directive on batteries and accumulators; the management of mining waste; end-use energy efficiency and energy services directive; stricter emissions standards for light duty vehicles; and applying the Aarhus Convention to the EC.

The Government will also seek to make progress on the implementation of the Environmental Technologies Action Plan (ETAP), to ensure that measures are taken to stimulate innovation and market penetration for environmental technologies so that synergies between environmental protection and enhanced economic competitiveness are fully exploited.

The UK and Luxembourg presidencies will also ensure effective preparation and coordination of international meetings throughout the year, including for the UNEP Governing Council, the UN CSD and the UN's high level review of Progress against the Millennium Declaration and the WSSD commitments. The annual meeting of the UN Climate Change Convention will be particularly important because of the expected entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

EU Fisheries

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures the European Community institutions are bringing forward covering the fishing fleets of the EU member states that acceded to the EU in 2004. [211355]

Mr. Bradshaw: The regulations which applied to the Community of 15 will apply equally to the new member states.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on levels of fishing by vessels from European Union member states that joined the EU in 2004 within the UK's home waters. [211356]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following quotas which can be fished in UK waters are held by the new member states for 2005:

Tonnes

	Poland	*Latvia*	*Lithuania*	*Estonia*
Mackerel	844	—	—	—
Greenland halibut	10	—	—	10
Roundnose grenadier	676	32	10	—
Deep sea sharks	10	—	10	—
Black scabbardfish	1	32	131	73
Blue ling	1	—	2	5

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by her Department in the last three years. [207829]

Alun Michael: I refer my hon. Friend to the Answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Ghost Ships

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the latest position in respect of the ghost ships at Hartlepool, indicating what action she plans to take. [210977]

Mr. Morley: The future of the four US ships on Teesside is primarily a matter for the US Marine Administration, as owners of the vessels, and Able UK, who are intending to seek the necessary permissions for dismantling the vessels at their Teesside facility.

The four US ships are currently docked in Able UK's Graythorp dock on Teesside. Able UK submitted applications for planning permission on 18 January 2005. These applications, which include proposals for the construction and refurbishment of quays, the construction of a cofferdam and new dock gates, will be determined by the relevant planning authority, Hartlepool borough council. An application for a waste management licence is expected in the next few weeks. Any such application would be determined by the Environment Agency.

In the meantime dismantling work is prevented by a waste management licence condition. The dock facility itself is subject, as necessary, to regular inspection by the Environment Agency in liaison with the Health and Safety Executive.

Goldfish

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reason the plan to make illegal the awarding of goldfish as prizes at fairgrounds has been dropped; and what discussions her Department held with the *(a)* Prime Minister and *(b)* Chancellor of the Exchequer on this matter. [210264]

Mr. Bradshaw: The draft Animal Welfare Bill which contained a provision relating to the giving of pets as prizes was published in July. The inclusion of the Bill in the Government's legislative programme was announced in the Queen's Speech. It would not be appropriate to speculate on any changes that may have been made to the published draft before the Bill is introduced in Parliament. As is usual with all Government legislation, there has been consultation across Government about its content.

Green Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the collection of green waste via kerbside collections, with particular reference to 240-litre bio-bins. [210974]

Mr. Morley: The Government supports the collection of green waste for composting via kerbside collections as part of a local authority's strategy for the diversion of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill in line with our commitment to meet the EU Landfill Directive targets. The Government encourages home composting as part of that strategy where appropriate in local circumstances. Local authorities may charge for the collection of green waste and this can influence the choice householders make in deciding how to deal with their green waste.

The choice of receptacle used for the collection of green waste is the responsibility of the local authority.

New Rural Agency

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what decisions have been made on funding the new integrated agency for rural delivery; and for what purposes the funding rolled over from the Environmental Action Fund was to be put. [211397]

Mr. Morley: The first full financial year of the new integrated agency is expected to be 2007–08. The rolled over funding of £1.95 million for 2005–06 under the Environmental Action Fund will go to existing recipients undertaking biodiversity projects. Arrangements for supporting biodiversity and natural resource protection in 2006–07 are being considered and will be announced in the summer.

Oil Contamination

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on the duration of damage to *(a)* soil and *(b)* ground water resulting from oil spills and leakages. [210632]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has undertaken a number of research projects that have considered the impact and attenuation of oil spills on soil and groundwater. In particular:

The Natural Attenuation of Petroleum Hydrocarbons and Chlorinated Solvents in Groundwater, report P 305 dated 1999

Guidance on the assessment and monitoring of natural attenuation of contaminants in groundwater, report number 95, dated 2000

These reports are available from the Environment Agency via the attached internet links:

http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SPRP2-134-01-e-p.pdf

http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SR-DPUB95-e-e.pdf

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the responses to the consultation, "Soil: the hidden resource", with particular reference to the risk of leakage from domestic oil tanks. [210926]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has recently finished assessing the responses to its consultation: 'Soil: the hidden resource' and will be issuing its response to the main points raised shortly. There was one specific query on the risks of leakage from domestic oil storage and the agency recognises the concerns raised. It has produced guidance on domestic oil storage in collaboration with the Federation of Petroleum Suppliers and OFTEC and strongly recommends that these guidelines are followed at all times, and that domestic oil storage facilities are installed and maintained by qualified technicians to ensure compliance with relevant British Standards.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what percentage of opportunities for research or consulting disseminated by the Department resulted in *(a)* research reports and *(b)* physical deliverables in each year since 2001–02. [207007]

Alun Michael: All research projects funded by Defra are required to produce final reports, which are then published on Defra's website. In addition, Defra encourages research contractors to publish the findings of Defra-funded research in science journals and in the science press wherever possible. We can identify 1,198 Defra published reports since 2001–02.

We would not expect to receive any other physical deliverables. Government and Defra policy following on from the Baker Report[1] is to leave ownership of intellectual property with the contractor. Thus any product of a material nature that is patent-worthy or has commercial potential is left with the contractor to develop further.

Veterinary Profession

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Department for Education and

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[1] "Creating knowledge creating wealth: Realising the economic potential of public sector research establishments", a report by John Baker to the Minister for Science and the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, August 1999.

Skills on maintaining recruitment into the veterinary profession, with particular reference to the State Veterinary Service. [211724]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Secretary of State has not had any direct discussions with the Department for Education and Skills. However, Sir Alan Langlands, vice-chancellor of Dundee University, has been commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills to examine the gateways into the professions, which include veterinary science, and to produce a report. In particular, he will consider how the public sector and professions can sustain and improve the recruitment opportunities for graduates.

My officials recently attended a consultation event presented by the Department for Education and Skills and my Department will make a full contribution to this initiative.

Waste Recycling

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the proportion of household waste recycled in Hartlepool was in each year since 1997. [210648]

Mr. Morley: The proportion of household waste sent for recycling or composting in Hartlepool since 1997 is presented in the table.

	Percentage of household waste sent for recycling or composting in Hartlepool
1997–98	4
1998–99	4
1999–2000	6
2000–01	5
2001–02	9
2002–03	11

Source:

Defra's Municipal Waste Management Survey (MWMS)

MWMS Data for 2003–04 have not been released yet. Best Value Performance Indicator data (for the percentage of household waste sent for recycling or composting) are usually a good indicator for Defra's MWMS. The 2003–04 BVPI figure for the percentage of household waste sent for recycling or composting in Hartlepool is 13 per cent.

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding Dudley council received from her Department for waste reduction, minimisation and recycling in each of the last four years; and if she will make a statement. [210922]

Mr. Morley: The main source of funding for Dudley council is through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) block of annual Government grant. It is for the local authority to decide what proportion of the block is invested in waste management services including recycling. It is therefore not possible to say how much funding Dudley received for waste reduction, minimisation and recycling in each of the last four years.

Dudley also received funding from the National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund; £665,000 in 2003–04 and £1,055, 695 in 2004–05.

To relieve spending pressures in the waste area Dudley received £81,745 in 2004–05.

The Waste and Resources Action Programme has allocated £20,000 to Dudley in 2004–05 to fund an awareness campaign related to kerbside collection.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of *(a)* domestic, *(b)* commercial and *(c)* industrial refuse has been recycled within the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [211047]

Mr. Morley: Results from the Defra Municipal Waste Management Survey show the following household waste recycling and composting rates in the Greater London area:

	Percentage
2000–01	9.0
2001–02	9.4
2002–03	10.9

Corresponding data for commercial and industrial waste are not available.

"Making Space for Water"

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the responses to the consultation, "Making space for water", with particular reference to the risk of damage to domestic oil tanks from flooding. [210925]

Mr. Morley: Some 270 responses have been received to the "Making space for water" consultation exercise, which sought views on proposals for a new Government strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England.

One response, from a major supplier of alternative fuel, made reference to the risk of damage to commercial and domestic oil tanks from flooding and the resulting environmental impact.

The Government is currently considering all the responses made to the consultation exercise with a view to publishing a Government response in spring 2005.

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Secretary

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects to appoint the next Cabinet Secretary. [212197]

The Prime Minister: The serving Cabinet Secretary, Sir Andrew Turnbull, is due to retire from the Civil Service later this year.

Drinks Industry (Meetings)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the meetings he has had with representatives of the drinks, licensing and public house industries in the last 12 months broken down by *(a)* date and *(b)* attendees; whether civil servants were present at each meeting to record what occurred; and what separate meetings his officials have had with the drinks industry. [209543]

The Prime Minister: During the consultation process on the Licensing Act and the Alcohol Strategy, Ministers and officials across Government met a wide range of companies, local authorities, trade unions, the police, and many public bodies and individuals, as part of the usual policy-making process. All meetings were undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the civil service code.

In May 2004 I attended the Responsible Drinking Forum, accompanied by my officials, where I gave a speech on alcohol abuse. A copy of this is available on the Number 10 website. My officials met the organisers of the Responsible Drinking Forum in preparation for this event.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list occasions when his office has organised briefing meetings on the European Constitution for those outside Government. [211387]

The Prime Minister: My officials and I regularly discuss the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe with outside stakeholders.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he will set a date for the referendum on the European Constitution. [212196]

The Prime Minister: Clause 6 (1) of the European Union Bill provides for the date of the referendum to be set by order, after the Bill has been approved by Parliament. No decision has yet been taken on the date.

Gulf Co-operation Council

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister when he plans to meet the Chairman of the Gulf Co-operation Council during the British Presidency of the EU. [212195]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to meet the Chairman of the Gulf Co-operation Council during the UK Presidency of the EU. Detailed planning for meetings during the UK Presidency is still under way. However, I have frequent contacts with the leaders of the GCC countries and intend to continue this.

Homelessness (Thames Gateway)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) on 26 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 300, on homelessness and the Thames Gateway development, to which hon. Member he was referring; and what the evidential basis was for his statement that the opposition planned to cancel the project. [211868]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), at Prime Minister's Questions on 26 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 300. A copy of the article that contains the pledge by the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) to which I referred has been placed in the Library of the House.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210537]

The Prime Minister: No central records are held and to obtain such records would incur disproportionate costs. Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210568]

The Prime Minister: No central records are held and to obtain such records would incur disproportionate costs. Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

TRANSPORT

Departmental Policies (Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency of his Department's policies since 8 June 2001. [206835]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Middlesbrough, South and Cleveland, East since 2001 is shown in the following table. It has been for Middlesbrough and

Redcar and Cleveland councils to determine how that allocation has spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

£ million

Local authority/ nature of funding	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Middlesbrough, South				
Capital maintenance	0.887	0.734	0.622	0.792
Integrated block	2.460	1.908	2.020	2.122
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.014	0.016	0.664	0.081
Total	3.361	2.658	3.306	2.995
Redcar and Cleveland				
Capital maintenance	1.568	1.621	1.555	1.739
Integrated block	1.710	1.584	1.584	2.315
Major schemes	0.618	1.750	0	0
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.72	0.82	0.281	0.86
Total	4.616	5.775	3.42	4.914

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Departmental Policies (Hull)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211801]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Kingston Upon Hull constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–07 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants(nitrous oxides and particles(fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Kingston Upon Hull since 1997 are shown in the table below[1]. It has been for Kingston Upon Hull to determine how that allocation was spent, in line with their local transport plan and their priorities.

Kingston Upon Hull local authority

£ million

Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital maintenance	0.552	1.248	1.461	1.501	1.461	1.678	1.892
Integrated block	1.950	2.530	2.675	7.100	5.800	5.800	6.840
Major schemes	0.300	0	0	0	0	0	0
Targeted bus grants[1]	0	0	0	0	0.8	0	0
Total	2.802	3.778	4.136	8.601	8.061	7.478	8.732

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding

In addition, since 1997 the Kingston Upon Hull constituency has benefited from major improvements to strategic infrastructure—for example, the Highways Agency's A1033 Hedon Road Improvement.

Finally, the neighbourhood statistics service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past twenty years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

Airline Traffic Rights

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in granting Syrian Air intermediate fifth freedom traffic rights between Manchester and Beirut. [211537]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has already granted Syrian Air intermediate fifth freedom traffic rights between Manchester and Beirut on a temporary basis following a request from the Syrian authorities. We hope to formalise this arrangement during discussions early this year.

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in granting Pakistan International Airlines additional traffic rights between Manchester and North America. [211538]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department is in discussion with the Pakistani aeronautical authorities to arrange air services negotiations on a range of matters relating to UK-Pakistan aviation relations, including traffic rights between Manchester and North America.

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made in granting Afriqiyah Airline landing rights at Manchester Airport. [211539]

Charlotte Atkins: Afriqiyah Airways of Libya already has the right to fly to Manchester Airport.

EC Legislation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on European Communities planned actions in the field of social legislation relating to road transport, with particular reference to projects arising from COM (2004) 360. [211385]

Mr. Jamieson: The two main action points arising from the report in question are being taken forward. The European Commission has made a legislative proposal to replace Council Regulation (EEC) No. 3820/85 on drivers' hours; this proposal is intended to clarify and simplify the legislation, make it easier to enforce, and update and remove outdated exemptions. Linked to this is a proposal to amend Directive 88/599/EEC on drivers' hours enforcement, which is intended to increase the quantity and quality of checks and harmonise enforcement practices.

The Transport Council adopted its common position on both these proposals in December 2004, and the European Parliament will consider the common positions shortly.

House Building (Transport Demand)

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Deputy Prime Minister and *(b)* the West Midlands Regional Assembly about the impact of new housing in Worcestershire on the demand for travel to Birmingham. [212075]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State and other Ministers in the Department for Transport have not had any discussions with either the Deputy Prime Minister or the West Midlands Regional Assembly about the impact of new housing in Worcestershire on the demand for travel to Birmingham.

Officials in both the Department for Transport and the Government Office for the West Midlands have, however, discussed the impact of new housing development across the West Midlands, including in Worcestershire, on the demand for travel in the West Midlands conurbation. Such discussions have been in the context of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the preparation of Local Transport Plans in Worcestershire and the conurbation. Working with ODPM the shared objective has been to ensure that regional and local strategies properly integrate transport with spatial planning to ensure sustainable strategies for economic growth.

Nottingham Express Transit

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the cost of the Nottingham Express Transit will be borne by the local authority. [211834]

Charlotte Atkins: As with all proposed light rail projects in England (outside London), the promoting authorities are expected to contribute at least 25 per cent. from local sources towards the net capital costs of the proposed extensions.

Number Plate Cloning

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his current assessment is of the extent of car number plate cloning; what action is taken against users of vehicles with cloned plates; what assessment he has made of the ease of making and using such plates; what plans he has for new *(a)* legislation and *(b)* sanctions to deal with those making or using cloned plates; if he will introduce measures to ensure that car owners whose number plates have been cloned or used without their knowledge are not penalised; and if he will make a statement. [211083]

Mr. Jamieson: Evidence from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) systems and the police suggests that cloning is being used by a small minority of motorists to avoid fines and charges. The police and DVLA are working closely to detect cloned vehicles.

In order to combat the problem of cloning and preventing people from obtaining number plates to which they are not entitled, the Government have introduced measures to tighten up the supply of plates. Since 1 January 2003 all suppliers of number plates have been required to register with DVLA and to keep records of sales. Purchasers of plates are required to produce evidence of their identity as well as the vehicle registration document. Number plate suppliers who fail to comply with these requirements can be fined up to £5,000 and suspended from the register for up to five years. The Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament will extend the register of number plate suppliers to Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It is already an offence to fail to display the correct registration mark on a vehicle and the maximum penalty is £1,000.

We are currently reviewing the issue of the physical security of number plates, including manufacture and methods of fixing to the vehicle. The aim is to prevent plates being stolen for reissue.

Potters Bar

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce a decision regarding a public inquiry into the Potters Bar derailment. [208504]

Mr. McNulty: The Secretary of State expects to be in a position to take a decision on whether to hold a public inquiry into the Potters Bar derailment once the Crown Prosecution Service has decided whether to bring prosecutions. However, this position is subject to periodic review.

Rail Freight

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are being taken by his Department to ensure that in-house rail freight expertise is *(a)* transferred to and *(b)* can be called upon by the new Department for Transport rail organisation. [211086]

Mr. McNulty: The rail freight activities of the SRA are transferring to the Department for Transport, and will be divided between the new Rail Group, and the Department's Logistics Policy Division. Detailed design and staffing of the new Rail Group, to enable the Department's rail responsibilities to be carried out effectively, is continuing. The Department is working closely with the SRA to ensure that it has the relevant capabilities for the new Rail Group. The Department is also in close contact with the rail freight industry.

Railways

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new miles of railway track have been brought into use since 1997; and if he will list the new lengths of track. [210425]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The Strategic Rail Authority advises that there have been 63.5 miles of new railway track brought into use since 1997. These comprise 12 miles from Worksop to Mansfield, four miles related to the Heathrow Express services and one and a half miles from Millerhill to Newcraighall. The Channel Tunnel Rail Link Section 1 from the Channel Tunnel to Fawkham Junction comprising 46 miles of new track was opened on 28 September 2003. In addition, three miles between Hamilton and Larkhill are due to be opened in early 2005.

Double tracking of the lines between Kidsgrove and Crewe (nine miles) and between Burngallow and Probus (seven miles) have added a further 16 miles of new track.

Regional Transport Boards

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with *(a)* Passenger Transport Authorities, *(b)* the Passenger Transport Executive, *(c)* Regional Chambers, *(d)* Regional Development Agencies and *(e)* the Local Government Association on proposals for regional transport boards; and if he will make a statement. [211588]

Charlotte Atkins: Ministers have recently met the English Regions Network representing the eight English regional chambers outside London to discuss the proposals in the consultation document "Devolving decision making: A consultation on regional funding allocations".

The Government have indicated in the consultation paper that they do not intend to prescribe institutional arrangements for how regions should coordinate and prepare advice on regional priorities. It will be for regions themselves to decide if they wish to establish regional transport boards or other arrangements.

We look forward to receiving the views of Passenger Transport Authorities and Executives, Regional Chambers, Regional Development Agencies, the Local Government Association, and other bodies on the proposals in the consultation document.

Speed Cameras

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much revenue has been paid to the Exchequer from speed camera operations in England in each year since 2001. [211146]

Mr. Jamieson: The revenue figures for the National Safety Camera Programme in England and Wales since 2001 are as follows. The table indicates the number of safety camera partnerships participating in the programme at each stage:

£

	Number of partnerships participating in programme	*Receipts from fixed penalties*	*Expenditure*	*Balance, accruing to the Consolidated Fund*
2000–01	7 partnerships	10,362,440	8,985,247	1,367,193
2001–02	7 partnerships, 14 from October 2001	19,660,780	16,106,559	3,554,221
2002–03	23 partnerships, 25 from July 2002, 29 from October 2002	68,872,320	54,256,502	14,615,818
2003–04	Provisional (35 partnerships)	112.2 million	91.8 million	20.4 million

Details of programme funding for 2002–01 to 2002–03 are given in "The national safety camera programme Three-year evaluation report", copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House, and are available from the Department's website. Except where special provisions apply, such as have been made for supporting the operation of approved safety cameras, the whole of offenders' fines normally accrue to the Consolidated Fund.

St. Pancras

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will instruct Network Rail to complete the necessary track and signalling work at King's Cross/St. Pancras to enable Great Northern services to be integrated with those of Thameslink prior to the opening of St. Pancras International Station in mid 2007. [209918]

Mr. McNulty: Track and signalling work at King's Cross/St. Pancras forms part of the Thameslink 2000 project and would not enable existing Great Northern trains to run south of St. Pancras without the main Thameslink 2000 works. These require Transport and Works Act and other consents. Network Rail's applications are to be considered at a re-opened public inquiry which will determine whether this can proceed.

TREASURY

Business Rates

Brian Cotter: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many non-domestic hereditaments in England are businesses with a rateable value of *(a)* £10,000 or less, *(b)* £25,000 or less and *(c)* £25,001 or more. [211589]

Mr. Timms: The number of non-domestic hereditaments, in England, with a rateable value of *(a)* £10,000 or less is 1,094,192, *(b)* £25,000 or less is 1,395,505 and *(c)* £25,001 or more is 257,679.

Carers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the number of carers who are over the age of 65 years. [211248]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Mark Oaten, dated 31 January 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what recent estimates have been made of the number of carers who are over the age of 65 years. (211248)

Figures from the Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales indicate that on Census day (29 April 2001) there were 944,650 people aged 65 and over in England and Wales providing unpaid care.

The information below has been extracted from the CD supplement to the 2001 Census National Report for England and Wales, which is available in the House of Commons Library. The table shows the distribution of these carers according to the number of hours of care provided per week.

Number of people aged 65 and over providing unpaid care in England and Wales, 2001

Hours of care provided per week	*Number*
1 to 19	501,318
20 to 49	102,182
50 or more	341,150
Total	944,650

Source:
Table S025 Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Berry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in Kingswood have benefited from the Child Trust Fund. [211872]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what estimate he has made of the number of children in Northampton, North who have received the Child Trust Fund. [211704]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211607]

Mr. Timms: In the last two years the Department has granted no contracts to either EDS or Fujitsu.

The Inland Revenue has a contractual relationship with Capgemini through the ASPIRE contract that was signed on 5 January 2004. Fujitsu are one of three material sub-contractors to Capgemini but have no direct contractual relationship with the Revenue.

HM Customs and Excise has a contractual relationship with Fujitsu through the Infrastructure Services Agreement which started in April 1999.

The Department awards contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations, based on best value for money.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency, the effects on Edinburgh, North and Leith of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211573]

Mr. Timms: Since our election in 1997 the Government have put in place a radical programme of both macro-economic and micro-economic reform to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 53 per cent., long-term unemployment by 86 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has almost been eradicated, with a reduction of 90 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull, North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211805]

Mr. Timms: Since our election in 1997 the Government have put in place a radical programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. There is significant evidence that these policies have already yielded considerable benefits for the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 45 per cent., long-term unemployment by 69 per cent. and long-term youth unemployment has almost been eradicated with a reduction of 97 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./

Drug Misuse Deaths

Paul Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths misuse of *(a)* heroin, *(b)* cocaine, *(c)* crack and *(d)* magic mushrooms was a contributory factor in each of the last 10 years. [211231]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Paul Flynn, dated 31 January 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking in how many deaths misuse of *(a)* heroin, *(b)* cocaine, *(c)* crack and *(d)* magic mushrooms was a contributory factor in each of the last 10 years. (211231)

Available figures relate to deaths where the underlying cause was drug poisoning, not the total number where misuse of drugs was a contributory factor. The most recently available information is for deaths in 2002. Figures are shown in the attached table for the calendar years 1993 to 2002.

Number of deaths from drug-related poisoning[1], involving selected drugs[2]: England and Wales, 1993 to 2002[3]

Number of deaths

	(a) heroin/ morphine	*(b) cocaine (including crack cocaine)*[4]	*(d) psilocybin (magic mushrooms)*
1993	187	12	1
1994	277	24	0
1995	357	19	0
1996	466	19	0
1997	445	39	0
1998	646	66	0
1999	754	88	0
2000	926	80	0
2001	889	96	0
2002	790	139	0

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5 for 1993 to 2000, and the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, X85 and Y10-Y14 from 2001 onwards.

[2] Drugs mentioned on the death certificate of a death where the underlying cause was drug poisoning.

[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[4] It is not possible to provide separate figures on deaths related to crack cocaine and cocaine from routine mortality data, as these substances are not generally separately identified on death certificates. ONS routinely publishes a combined figure for deaths mentioning cocaine on the death certificate. It is not possible, in cases where more than one substance is mentioned on the death certificate, to state which was primarily responsible for the death.

EU Accounting Requirements

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list those accounting requirements set out in Commission Regulation (EC) 2238/2004, OJ L394 volume 47 of 31 December 2004 that will apply to and within member states but not to European Community institutions; and if he will make a statement. [211358]

Mr. Timms: Commission Regulation (EC) 2238/2004 amended Regulation 1725/2003, which itself amended Regulation 1606/2002, the Regulation which set out the requirements for the adoption and use of international accounting standards by member states and the Commission. The Regulation was amended to incorporate the updated international accounting standards—some have been revised and one has been withdrawn. Applicability to member states and the Commission has not changed.

European Communities Pensions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of European Communities pensions was in the last year for which figures are available; and what the forecast cost is for *(a)* 2014, *(b)* 2024, *(c)* 2034 and *(d)* 2044. [211360]

Mr. Timms: The total amount allocated for pensions in the 2004 budget was €817.6 million. No specific Commission forecasts are available for the years requested, but for historical and demographic reasons, pension costs will take an increasing share of the €6 billion administration budget. Forecasts from 2002 suggested that costs would reach around €1.5 billion by 2015 but then stabilise in real terms. The Commission reforms of 2003 helped to reduce this future burden by increasing the retirement age to 63, abolishing correction co-efficients and increasing contributions from EU officials.

Mr. Hayes: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the ongoing pensions liabilities of the European Coal and Steel Community; and to where pension funds were transferred from closed budget lines and accounts. [211386]

Mr. Timms: We understand that the pension budget of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was transferred to the European Community's budget when the ECSC was wound up in 2002.

EU Court of Auditors

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what liabilities arise for the European Commission where budget discharge has not been granted by the Court of Auditors under Article 276 of the EC Treaty and Article 143 of the Financial Regulation. [211377]

Mr. Timms: The European Court of Auditors publishes an annual report on the Commission's management of the Community budget. When the report is published it includes the responses and comments of the European Commission on the Auditors' findings, as required by Article 143 of the Financial Regulation. The Council considers the report and makes a recommendation on discharge to the European Parliament. The European Parliament considers the Council's recommendation, as required under Article 276 of the EGA Treaty, and votes on a resolution on discharge. The Commission is required, also under Article 276, to take all appropriate steps to act on the observations made by the Court of Auditors, the Council and the European Parliament—including observations relevant to those sectors of the budget to which the Court of Auditors did not give a positive Statement of Assurance—and it produces an annual report on the actions it has taken.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the assessed sum level of fraud within those areas of the European Communities budgets that have not been signed off by the European Court of Auditors. [211376]

Mr. Timms: The Government takes the issue of fraud or financial malpractice in the European Community's budgets very seriously and has pressed and continues to press for effective action to be taken, including the setting up of an independent and powerful European Anti-Fraud Office and an effective reform of the financial rules which ensures greater accountability and effectiveness of spending.

The European Commission's annual "Fight Against Fraud" report publishes the amounts of irregularities reported each year by member states. The most recent report covered 2003. The figures published were:

Own Resources total irregularities declined from €342 million in 2002 to €270 million in 2003—down 21 per cent.;

EAGGF Guarantee declined from €198 million to €169 million—down 15 per cent.;

Structural Funds went down from €614 million to €482 million—down 22 per cent.

When added together, the total irregularities reported in 2003 were €921 million—a reduction of 20 per cent. from the €1,154 million reported in 2002.

The Commission's report deliberately does not provide a breakdown between cases of irregularity and fraud; fraud is defined and treated differently in each member state. Past estimates made by OLAF (the EU Anti-Fraud office) have suggested that around 20 per cent. of reported irregularities may turn out to be fraud. Applying this to the 2003 figure would suggest that the amount of fraud could be around €185 million. This would represent around 0.2 per cent. of total EC Budget expenditure in 2003.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which organisations received funding contrary to finding 6.25 of the European Court of Auditors' report for 2003; and if he will make a statement. [211410]

Mr. Timms: The Government takes the issue of fraud or financial malpractice in the European Community's budgets very seriously and has pressed and continues to press for effective action to be taken, including the setting up of an independent and powerful European Anti-Fraud Office and an effective reform of the financial rules which ensures greater accountability and effectiveness of spending.

In order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. In this particular case it is encouraging that the Commission has already taken action to remind member states of the appropriate provisions.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will identify the ineligible expenditure referred to in paragraph 7.39 of the European Court of Auditors annual report for 2003. [211412]

Mr. Timms: In order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. In this particular case it is encouraging that the Commission has already taken action to improve controls and to rectify the specific irregularities indicated by the ECA.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will identify the cases referred to in paragraph 9.45 of the European Court of Auditors annual report for 2003. [211413]

Mr. Timms: In order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. However in this particular case it is encouraging that the Economic and Social Committee has taken corrective action to prevent similar errors recurring in future.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the cases of fraud identified in paragraph 31 of page 332 of the European Court of Auditors annual report for 2003. [211414]

Mr. Timms: In order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. In addition, since these cases have now been referred to OLAF it would not be appropriate to comment until OLAF's investigation has been completed.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on each of the cases of irregularity identified in *(a)* paragraph 43 of page 335 and *(b)* paragraph 65 of page 345 of the European Court of Auditors annual report for 2003. [211415]

Mr. Timms: In order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. However it is encouraging to note that the Commission has taken action in response to the ECA's findings, by issuing new guidelines, initiating its own audit, and launching a comprehensive inventory in order to carry out a complete survey of these funds.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library the latest Commission Report on the Beneficiaries of Grants Made Under Chapter A-30; and which *(a)* internal audit and *(b)* Court of Auditors report related to these grants. [211417]

Mr. Timms: The European Commission produced its latest report on Chapter A-30 on 31 May 2004 in respect of EC Budget year 2003. I am arranging for a copy of this Report to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The Government has no information about specific internal audit reports.

The European Court of Auditors has not produced a specific report on A-30 funded projects. Its audit of the 2003 EC Budget may have included sample checks on A-30 projects covered by the European Commission's Report.

European Union

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1084W, on the European Union, what his Department's policy is on *(a)* analysing the cost-effectiveness of EU information campaigns and *(b)* applying for Communities funds to assist such campaigns. [207108]

Mr. Timms: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office take the lead in communicating EU matters on behalf of the UK Government. Three-year budgets are agreed at each spending review; within that framework Departments are accountable for their spending and for ensuring value for money.

Propriety in spending on information campaigns, as in all Government spending, is ensured by the requirement that spending only occurs where the Government has the appropriate vires to do so. This applies whether funding comes from the EU budget or from the consolidated fund.

Film Industry

Mr. Swire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when his Department expects to complete the review of the section 42 film tax incentive; which film industry organisations and representatives were involved; and when the findings of the review will be published. [211691]

Mr. Timms: As announced in the 2004 pre-Budget report, the Government are in the process of consulting with the UK Film Council and industry stakeholders on an early review, to the end of January 2005, of the tax relief that is used by large-budget British films. The outcome of the review will be announced in due course.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish *(a)* the Office of Government Commerce's (OGC's) Gateway Zero review into the identity cards scheme and *(b)* all other OGC reviews of the scheme. [208284]

Mr. Boateng: I am currently reviewing whether there is any Gateway Review or other OGC review which should be published regarding the identity cards scheme and I will write to the hon. Member as soon as these considerations are complete.

Income Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many 16 and 17-year-olds are liable for income tax. [211144]

Dawn Primarolo: The specific information requested is not available. For all income tax payers under 20 I refer the hon. Member to table 3.2 'Distribution of median and mean income by age range and sex' on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/menu-by-year.htm#32.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his most recent estimate is of the monthly cost of operations in Iraq; what the average monthly cost of operations since the war ended is; what the cost of operations during the war were; what the monthly costs incurred in relation to Iraq in addition to the costs of operations are; what the UK's financial commitment is to Iraq; what the *(a)* gross and *(b)* net sums are in each case where the former includes sums transferred from existing budgets; and if he will make a statement. [211179]

Mr. Boateng: The Treasury does not estimate costs for Iraq in the manner requested. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Old Bexley and Sidcup (Derek Conway) on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 404–05W.

The cost of operations such as Iraq is normally charged to the Reserve rather than transferred from existing budgets. The Reserve is a provision prudently set aside in Spending Reviews to provide for these events and for other emergencies such as the foot and mouth epidemic.

ISAs

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost of restoring the 10 per cent. tax credit on dividends payable on shares held in equity ISAs. [211738]

Mr. Timms: No estimates are held for restoring the 10 per cent. tax credit. However, estimates of the cost of the 10 per cent. tax credit on dividend payments made on shares held in ISAs for the years 1999–2000 to 2003–04 are available and are supplied.

	Cost (£ million)
1999–2000	10
2000–01	30
2001–02	60
2002–03	60
2003–04	80

Sporting Bodies (Tax Payments)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the amount of tax paid by sporting bodies in the UK in the last year for which figures are available. [211905]

Mr. Timms: No separate information is available on tax paid by sporting bodies.

Stamp Duty

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the revenue effect would be of restructuring residential stamp duty *(a)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £80,000 and leaving all other thresholds unchanged, *(b)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £100,000 and leaving all other thresholds unchanged, *(c)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £120,000 and leaving all other thresholds unchanged, *(d)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £80,000 and raising all other thresholds by £20,000, *(e)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £100,000 and raising all other thresholds by £40,000 and *(f)* by increasing the zero rate threshold to £120,000 and raising all other thresholds by £60,000. [213285]

Mr. Timms: The estimated revenue cost, in 2005–06, of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales according to the six schemes described in the question is given in the following tables.

Rate	Tax regime 1 thresholds	Tax regime 2 thresholds	Tax regime 3 thresholds
0 per cent.	£0–80,000	£0–100,000	£0–120,000
1 per cent.	£80,001–250,000	£100,001–250,000	£120,001–250,000
3 per cent.	£250,001–500,000	£250,001–500,000	£250,001–500,000
4 per cent.	£500,001 and above	£500,001 and above	£500,001 and above
Revenue cost (£ million)	70	170	300

Rate	Tax regime 4 thresholds	Tax regime 5 thresholds	Tax regime 6 thresholds
0 per cent.	£0–80,000	£0–100,000	£0–120,000
1 per cent.	£80,001–270,000	£100,001–290,000	£120,001–310,000
3 per cent.	£270,001–520,000	£290,001–540,000	£310,001–560,000
4 per cent.	£520,001 and above	£540,001 and above	£560,001 and above
Revenue cost (£ million)	290	620	1,050

This does not include any allowance for behavioural changes.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Inland Revenue will make its decision on the request of Mrs. Fury, a constituent of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead, that it reconsider its decision to claim back an overpayment in tax credits, made on 7 December 2004. [212055]

Mr. Timms: The Inland Revenue wrote to my right hon. Friend about his constituent on 28 January 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants were paid compensation by the Inland Revenue between April 2004 and the end of December 2004. [212067]

Mr. Timms: Around 14,400 compensation payments for tax credits were made between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2004.

The circumstances in which the Inland Revenue will make compensation payments to its customers are explained in the Department's Code of Practice 1 "Putting things right" which is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of its mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes or delays.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Access to Work

Mr. Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to adopt changes to the Access to Work scheme similar to those recently introduced in Northern Ireland. [208508]

Maria Eagle: There are no plans to adopt changes to the Access to Work programme similar to those introduced in Northern Ireland.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he has taken to promote the Access to Work programme; and if he will make a statement. [209715]

Maria Eagle: Jobcentre Plus invests around £300,000 a year marketing and publicising its disability services and programmes, including Access to Work.

Leaflets and information about Access to Work are freely available in Jobcentres and Jobcentre Plus offices. Disability Employment Advisers regularly meet local employers to promote the full range of disability services, including Access to Work.

Information on all disability services, including Access to Work, is available on the Jobcentre Plus website. The web address www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk is included on Jobcentre Plus publicity material and can be accessed through most internet search engines.

Many disability organisations actively promote Access to Work to their members and some have information about Access to Work on their web pages which is regularly quality-assured by Jobcentre Plus.

Details of Access to Work are available to all Jobcentre Plus Account Managers to draw upon, as part of their Employer Services Portfolio—a marketing folder containing details of all the services Jobcentre Plus can offer to employers.

Benefit Payments (Cleethorpes)

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each electoral ward in Cleethorpes constituency are claiming disability living allowance. [211139]

Maria Eagle: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Vivien Hopkins to Shona McIsaac, dated 27 January 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked Mr. Terry Moran, the Chief Executive, to reply to your question concerning how many people in each electoral ward in Cleethorpes constituency claim Disability Living Allowance (DLA). In Mr Moran's absence and as his deputy, I am replying on his behalf.

The number of people in each ward of the Cleethorpes constituency in receipt of Disability Living Allowance is as follows.

Parliamentary constituency	*Ward*	*DLA claimants*
Cleethorpes	Barton	435
Cleethorpes	Croft Baker	660
Cleethorpes	Ferry	465
Cleethorpes	Haverstoe	315
Cleethorpes	Humberston and New Waltham	400
Cleethorpes	Immingham	580
Cleethorpes	Sidney Sussex	665
Cleethorpes	Waltham	220
Cleethorpes	Wolds	205

1. All wards based on census wards—those current as at April 2003.

2. DLA figures are taken at August 2004, and include all DLA claimants including children, working age and pensioners claiming DLA.

3. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:

Information Directorate, Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each electoral ward in Cleethorpes constituency claimed winter fuel allowance in 2003–04; and how many have claimed the allowance in 2004–05. [211140]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each electoral ward of Cleethorpes who received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 is in the table. Figures are not yet available for winter 2004–05 but we expect the numbers to be similar.

Ward name	*Winter fuel payment recipients*
Barton	2,195
Croft Baker	2,250
Ferry	2,210
Haverstoe	2,255
Humberston and New Waltham	2,215
Immingham	2,180
Sidney Sussex	2,240
Waltham	2,300
Wolds	2,295

Notes:

1. All Wards based on Census Wards—those current as at April 2003.

2. WFP Data is the latest currently available, Winter 2003–04.

3. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre

Benefits Offices (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are employed at the benefits offices earmarked for closure in Scotland. [212003]

Maria Eagle: The total number of staff currently employed by the Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies in offices in Scotland which are earmarked for closure is 1,823.

Call Centre Operatives

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what rules govern responses to requests by clients for the names of the call centre operatives working for his Department and its associated public bodies who are giving them advice. [210434]

Maria Eagle: The DWP Identification Framework requires that all customers must be given a named contact who will be able to deal with their enquiry.

Carers

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carers are in receipt of both the carers premium and the basic state pension. [211827]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 August 2004, the most recent date for which figures are available, approximately 100,900 recipients of pension credit who were in receipt of the extra amount payable to carers were also in receipt of basic state pension.

Note:

The figure, rounded to the nearest 100, is based on a 5 per cent. sample and is subject to a high degree of sampling variation.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions

Child Support Agency

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects Child Support Agency (CSA) cases at the Dudley CSA office that concern people living in Stoke-on-Trent to be transferred to the new system. [210857]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the written answer given to the hon. Member for Ashford (Mr. Green), on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 568W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the letter of the Secretary of State to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead dated 16 December 2004, what the results have been of the discussions with EDS for delivering a working IT scheme for the Child Support Agency; and on what date he expects such a scheme to come into operation. [212068]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mr. Frank Field, dated 31 January 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, pursuant to the letter of the Secretary of State to the hon. Member for Birkenhead dated 16th December 2004 what the results have been of the discussions with EDS for delivering a working IT scheme for the Child Support Agency; and on what date he expects such a scheme to come into operation.

Discussions with EDS are still continuing and a meeting with senior executives is scheduled for early February. They remain on track for delivering the software and telephony upgrade needed to remedy the most serious defects with the system. Beyond that we are working with them on a longer term plan intended to support the recovery of the Agency's work position. Ministers have been clear that they will not decide on when to extend the arrangements to existing clients until they are satisfied that is working well for new clients.

Citizens Pensions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what cost-benefit analysis his Department has undertaken in the last five months of the introduction of citizens pensions; [212006]

(2) what cross-departmental meetings involving his Department have been held in the last five months in the introduction of citizens pensions. [212007]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department is examining a range of pensions proposals, including options for broader-based State provision. We keep policy proposals under constant review and are engaged in discussions across Government on such matters on a continual basis.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206875]

Maria Eagle: The Pensions Act 2004 (c.35) was the only DWP-sponsored primary legislation during the sessions 2002–03 and 2003–04 which created criminal offences. Those criminal offences are:

s77(1) A person who, without reasonable excuse, neglects or refuses to provide information or produce a document when required to do so under section 72 is guilty of an offence.

s77(2) A person who without reasonable excuse

(a) intentionally delays or obstructs an inspector exercising any power under section 73, 74 or 75,

(b) neglects or refuses to produce, or secure the production of, any document when required to do so under section 75, or

(c) neglects or refuses to answer a question or to provide information when so required, is guilty of an offence.

s77(5) Any person who intentionally and without reasonable excuse alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys any document which he is or is liable to be required to produce under section 72 or 75 is guilty of an offence

s80(1) Any person who knowingly or recklessly provides the Regulator with information which is false or misleading in a material particular is guilty of an offence if the information

(a) is provided in purported compliance with a requirement under

(i) section 62 (the register: duties of trustees or managers),

(ii) section 64 (duty of trustees or managers to provide scheme return),

(iii) section 72 (provision of information), or

(iv) section 75 (inspection of premises: powers of inspectors),

(b) is provided in applying for registration of a pension scheme under section 2 of the Welfare Reform and Pensions Act 1999 (c 30) (registration of stakeholder pension schemes), or

(c) is provided otherwise than as mentioned in paragraph *(a)* or *(b)* but in circumstances in which the person providing the information intends, or could reasonably be expected to know, that it would be used by the Regulator for the purpose of exercising its functions under this Act or the Pensions Act 1995 (c 26).

s82(5) Any person who discloses information in contravention of this section is guilty of an offence.

s193(1) A person who, without reasonable excuse, neglects or refuses to provide information or produce a document when required to do so under section 191 is guilty of an offence s193(2) A person who without reasonable excuse

(a) intentionally delays or obstructs an appointed person exercising any power under section 192,

(b) neglects or refuses to produce, or secure the production of, any document when required to do so under that section, or

(c) neglects or refuses to answer a question or to provide information when so required,

is guilty of an offence.

s193(6) Any person who intentionally and without reasonable excuse alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys any document which he is or is liable to be required to produce under section 191 or 192 is guilty of an offence.

s195(1) Any person who knowingly or recklessly provides information which is false or misleading in a material particular is guilty of an offence if the information

(a) is provided in purported compliance with a requirement under

(i) section 190 (information to be provided to the Board etc),

(ii) section 191 (notices requiring provision of information), or

(iii) section 192 (entry of premises), or

(b) is provided otherwise than as mentioned in paragraph *(a)* but in circumstances in which the person providing the information intends, or could reasonably be expected to know, that it would be used by the Board for the purposes of exercising its functions under this Act.

s197(5) Any person who discloses information in contravention of this section is guilty of an offence. s256(4)) Where a trustee or manager of an occupational or personal pension scheme

(a) is reimbursed, out of the assets of the scheme or in consequence of provision for his reimbursement made out of those assets, in respect of any of the matters mentioned in subsection (1)*(a)* or *(b)*, and

(b) knows, or has reasonable grounds to believe, that he has been reimbursed as mentioned in paragraph *(a)*,

then, unless he has taken all reasonable steps to secure that he is not so reimbursed, he is guilty of an offence.

Schedule 4 paragraph (3) A person who without reasonable excuse refuses or fails

(a) to attend following the issue of a summons by the Tribunal, or

(b) to give evidence,

is guilty of an offence.

Schedule 4 paragraph (5) A person who without reasonable excuse

(a) alters, suppresses, conceals or destroys a document which he is or is liable to be required to produce for the purposes of proceedings before the Tribunal, or

(b) refuses to produce a document when so required,

is guilty of an offence.

There is also a power under s314*(b)* to create offences relating to failure to comply with regulations using affirmative regulations and s218(3) provides that obstructing the PPF Ombudsman will be treated as a contempt of court.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year and what the costs were of each settlement. [206460]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service.

The available information is in the table. Data concerning case numbers, court cases and settlements could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

	Amount (£)
1997–98	1,504,451.10
1998–99	1,397,488.04
1999–2000	1,576,455.00
2000–01	1,872,967.66
2001–02	2,843,386.00
2002–03	3,076,455.50
2003–04	3,159,313.00

Notes:

1. Information for periods prior to June 2001 refers to the former DSS.

2. The information provided refers only to expenditure on litigation, not advisory work.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210330]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 1997 the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Clwyd South will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable, to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well-off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 31 per cent. of adults and 7 per cent. of children in Wales are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Clwyd, South who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Clwyd, South parliamentary constituency

Operational year	DLA/AA recipients
2001	6,300
2002	6,800
2003	6,800
2004	7,100

Source:

DWP Information Centre. Figures are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Clwyd, South, the proportion in employment has risen to 74 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 1,400 in Clwyd, South alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures for 2002–03 show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,200 families in Clwyd, South.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country, and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the State Second Pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. Around 3,860 pensioners in Clwyd, South are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £41.20 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–02) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over, to help with their fuel bills. Additionally for this year eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the One-off 70+ Payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments are available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their Basic State Pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 12,900 pensioners in Clwyd, South have benefited from this increase.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the company pension funds identified in government-funded research as potentially eligible for the financial assistance scheme, broken down by estimated number of relevant scheme members. [210996]

Malcolm Wicks: We are currently analysing information on pension schemes obtained from our recent data collection exercise. Once we have done so we hope, as indicated in the written ministerial statement I gave on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS, to be able to issue an indicative list of schemes likely to be eligible for assistance if they are subsequently shown to comply with the financial assistance scheme rules.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when his Department first publicly described the financial assistance scheme as an emergency package. [211993]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's announcement of the financial assistance scheme (FAS) on 14 May 2004 made clear that the FAS is intended to deal with the considerable hardship caused by pension schemes winding up underfunded before the introduction of the Pension Protection Fund, which will cover such cases in the future. That objective is reflected in my oral answer on FAS as an emergency package on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 18.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when he expects the financial assistance scheme to commence; [212004]

(2) what cross-departmental meetings have been held in the last 10 weeks on the timing of the commencement of the operation of the financial assistance scheme. [212005]

Malcolm Wicks: On the expected start date for the financial assistance scheme, I refer to the written statement I gave on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 66WS. As usual when a new policy is introduced, we have held and continue to hold a number of meetings on operational issues both within DWP and with other relevant Government Departments.

Income Support (Disabled Claimants)

Mr. Edwards: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what framework his Department has put in place to enable a disabled claimant whose income support has been withdrawn under the cohabitation rule to have benefit restored if it can be demonstrated that he is not living with his carer as husband and wife; and if he will examine the case of Mr. Woodward, a constituent. [205705]

Malcolm Wicks: Where there is a dispute as to whether unmarried persons who share accommodation can be treated as living as husband and wife for income support purposes, a decision will be made by a decision maker. This decision is based on a careful consideration of all the relevant circumstances. No unmarried persons would be assessed as living together as husband and wife merely because they shared accommodation.

The decision maker will refer to a number of key criteria in deciding whether or not two people are treated as a single unit for income support purposes, but the decision is made on the relationship as a whole. When the decision letter is sent to the customer advising that their income support is no longer payable, they are advised what they can do if they disagree with the decision, including details of the appeals process.

For reasons of confidentiality, I will write to my hon. Friend about his constituent.

Jobcentre Plus

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what standards are set in Jobcentre Plus offices for *(a)* response times within which telephone numbers which are advertised to the public are answered and *(b)* the percentage of time in a working day when lines are not engaged; and what the most recent figures are for performance against these standards. [208512]

Jane Kennedy: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 31 January 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the response times on telephone calls. You asked specifically about the response times before telephone numbers which are advertised to the public are answered, the percentage of time in a working day when lines are not engaged and what the most recent figures are for the performance against these standards. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus has a Customers' Charter which sets out the level of service that customers can expect when dealing with us, including the standards we aim for when answering telephone calls. The current standard states "when you phone us or use a textphone we aim to answer your call within 30 seconds". The Charter is available from our local offices or can be printed from the internet through the Jobcentre Plus website. I have placed a copy of the latest version of the Charter in the Library.

This standard has been in place since the introduction of Jobcentre Plus and applies equally to all areas of the business—whether delivered through our local offices or through the network of modern contact centres that we are putting in place.

In the Jobcentre Plus National Customer Satisfaction Survey 2003, a copy of which is available in the Library, we asked our customers if this standard still met their expectations. Of those respondents who normally contacted us by telephone 69 per cent. felt that it was reasonable to wait at least 30 seconds and nearly two thirds of those people considered it reasonable to wait over a minute.

However, although the length of time taken is considered reasonable by many of our customers we endeavour to answer all incoming calls as quickly as possible for the people who need our services.

You asked for our most recent figures for performance in two separate areas. The performance of the 30 second response time is measured in two ways: through a Mystery Shopping Programme which measures performance against a range of service standards as defined in our Customer Service Target; and by Management Information from our contact centre network. I have provided that information. However, our telephony systems do not measure the percentage of time in a working day when lines are not engaged and I am therefore unable to respond to that part of your question.

Mystery Shopping Programme

We are moving towards an organisational structure in which many of our services will be delivered by telephone—but at the moment nearly 50 per cent. of the local office network has still to be converted to the integrated Jobcentre Plus service delivery model. Many of those offices do not have centralised switchboard systems, nor dedicated telephony teams. We therefore use the Mystery Shopping programme to undertake telephone calls on a sampled basis at a level that will provide us with robust information for the network as a whole.

The programme is undertaken by an external contractor (NOP Mystery Shopping). It includes three telephone calls to each office per quarter. The information for the first three quarters of this year (April—December) show:

Time taken to answer	*Percentage*
0 to 30 seconds	79.3
31 to50 seconds	5.6
51 to 60 seconds	2.5
Total calls made	10,105

Of the remaining calls, they were either not completed as we instruct NOP to abandon calls not answered within one minute or a message/answer phone service cut in.

Contact Centres

Our network of contact centres deliver services by telephone to those customers making new/repeat claims to benefit or those wanting to find jobs. For each type of service the contact centres have a more demanding internal standard of answering 80 per cent. of all calls within 20 seconds from the time that a call is routed to an agent. There is also a target to answer 95 per cent. of calls.

The contact centres handling new/repeat claims answered on average 80 per cent. of calls within 20 seconds, with 91.1 per cent. of calls being answered.

The contact centres helping customers to find jobs answered 91 per cent. of calls within 20 seconds, with 97.5 per cent. of all calls being answered.

I hope this information is helpful.

New Deal

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has conducted into the average cost per additional job created *(a)* under the new deal programmes and *(b)* in employment zones; whether the research produced figures broken down by region; and whether research investigated (i) the number who would have found employment notwithstanding the new deal and (ii) the effect on (A) tax receipts and (B) unemployment benefits from the jobs created. [210947]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* Research has been conducted on the macro-economic effect of the new deal for young people (NDYP) and the new deal for lone parents (NDLP). Information is not available on costs per additional job by region. A full cost-benefit analysis, including the effect on tax benefits and unemployment benefits, is not available.

New Deal for Young People

The National Institute for Economic and Social Research (NIESR) undertook a detailed macro-economic analysis of NDYP until March 2000[1]. NIESR calculated the net budgetary cost per job was £7,000 per annum (excluding the Environmental Task Force and Voluntary Sector options) or £4,000 per annum when these two options are included. The National Audit Office report[2] suggested that the average annual cost per additional person of any age in employment through the new deal for young people is within the range of £5,000-£8,000.

NIESR calculated that by March 2000, NDYP had reduced unemployment among all age groups by 35,000. They also estimated that NDYP raised youth employment by 15,000 (excluding those on the Environmental Task Force and Voluntary Sector options). Adding these two options raised this to 30,000 more young people in work due to NDYP.

New Deal for Lone Parents

Evidence on the cost-effectiveness of the new deal for lone parents (NDLP) comes from the provisional cost-benefit analysis of NDLP carried out by departmental economists. The findings were published in the NDLP Evaluation Synthesis Report in June 2003[3]. The unit costs of NDLP in 2000–01 were £400 per participant. The gross cost per job was around £860.

A calculation of cost-effectiveness takes into account the additional earnings from movements into work and the costs of running the programme in 2000–01. NDLP provided a significant net economic gain to society, with a net benefit of over £4,400 from each additional job, and a total net gain of £115 million.

The net impact on public finance was also calculated. This included the cost of in-work credits and benefits such as the working families' tax credit. NDLP in 2001–02 resulted in a net exchequer saving of £1,600 for each additional job entry—a total saving of £41.5 million.

Employment Zones

The gross cost per job of Employment Zones has been estimated by the Department to be £3,115 per job without benefit payments and £6,027 per job with benefit payments.

There has been no macro-economic analysis undertaken of the net impact of Employment Zones on the 25 plus client group. Research undertaken by the National Centre for Social Research[4] estimated the comparative outcomes of Employment Zones and new deal 25 plus.

Other New Deals

Information is not available on new deal 25 Plus, new deal for disabled or new deal for partners. Information is not available on those who would have found employment without the new deal.

[1] New Deal for Young People: Implications for Employment and the Public Finances, NIESR, December 2000 (Ref: ESR62).

[2] New Deal for Young People, National Audit Office, February 2002.

[3] Evaluation of the New Deal for Lone Parents: Early lessons from the Phase One Prototype—Synthesis Report. Research Report 108, June 2003.

[4] National Centre for Social Research (2003): Evaluation of Employment Zones: Report on a Cohort Survey of Long Term Unemployed People in the Zones and a Matched Set of Comparison Areas.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Burnley have found work through the new deal programmes since 1997. [210970]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

New deal in Burnley

Programme	*Number of individuals into work*
New Deal for Young People	740
New Deal 25 plus	240
New Deal for Lone Parents	690
New Deal 50 plus	140
Total	1,810

Notes:

1. All data is to September 2004 except New Deal 50 plus which is to March 2003.

2. New Deal 50 plus figures are for the number of people who started work with the help of the New Deal 50 plus employment credit. Information is not available at constituency level for New Deal 50 plus after March 2003.

3. Data is not available at constituency level for the New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners programmes.

4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest ten.

Source:

DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* young people, *(b)* single mothers, *(c)* disabled people, *(d)* people aged over 50 years and *(e)* others have benefited from the new deal in the Nottingham, North constituency since its inception. [211016]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

Number of people benefiting from the new deal in Nottingham, North

	Individual starts	*Individuals into work*
Total	6,350	3,200
Young people	3,100	1,620
Single mothers	1,710	850
Disabled people	750	380
People aged 50 plus	640	300

Notes:

1. People can be included in more than one of these categories.

2. Young people figures relate to the number of clients who have started, and gained a job through the new deal for young people programme and people aged 24 and under on the new deal for lone parents programme.

3. Single mothers figures relate to the number of female lone parents who have started, and gained a job through the new deal for lone parents programme.

4. Disabled people figures relate to the number of people with disabilities who have started, and gained a job through the new deal for young people; new deal 25 plus; New deal for lone parents and new deal 50 plus programmes. Information on the new deal for disabled people is not available at constituency level.

5. The people aged 50 plus figures relate to the number of people aged 50 and over who have started, and gained a job through the new deal 50 plus; new deal 25 plus, and new deal for lone parents programmes.

6. New deal for partners information is not available at constituency level.

7. New deal 50 plus data is to March 2003. New deal 50 plus information is not available at constituency level after March 2003.

8. New deal for young people, new deal 25 plus and new deal for lone parents data is to September 2004.

9. New deal for young people started in January 1998; New deal 25 plus started in July 1998; New deal for lone parents started in October 1998; New deal 50 plus started in April 2000.

10. All figures have been rounded to the nearest ten.

11. Totals figures include people who have been helped through the new deal in Nottingham, North but who are not included in the individual categories.

Source:

DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have started each of the new deal for employment programmes in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire; and how many have entered work. [211141]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the table.

New Deal in North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire

	New Deal for Young People		*New Deal 25 plus*		*New Deal for Lone Parents*		*New Deal 50 plus*
	Individual starts	*Individuals into work*	*Individual starts*	*Individuals into work*	*Individual starts*	*Individuals into work*	*Individuals into work*
North East Lincolnshire	4,340	2,920	2,100	870	2,470	1,430	640
North Lincolnshire	2,540	1,660	850	350	1,520	750	300
Total	6,880	4,570	2,940	1,220	3,990	2,180	940

Notes:

1. Figures relate to the local authority districts of North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire.

2. New Deal for Young People information is from January 1998 to September 2004.

3. New Deal 25 plus information is from July 1998 to September 2004.

4. New Deal for Lone Parents information is from October 1998 to September 2004.

5. New Deal 50 plus information relates to the number of New Deal 50 plus employment credit starts up to the end of March 2003. New Deal 50 plus information is not available at local authority level after March 2003.

6. New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners information is not available at local authority level.

7. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and components may not sum to totals.

Source:

DWP Information and Analysis Directorate

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals have been on the New Deal in Dudley, North constituency in each year since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [211193]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the following table.

New deal in Dudley, North

	New deal for young people		*New deal 25 plus*		*New deal for lone parents*		*New deal 50 plus—employment Credit Starts*
	Individual starts	*Individuals into work*	*Individual starts*	*Individuals into work*	*Individual starts*	*Individuals into work*	
Pre October 1998	200	70	20	0	0	0	0
October 1998 to September 1999	210	150	130	40	100	60	0
October 1999 to September 2000	230	220	140	70	120	110	50
October 2000 to September 2001	250	190	380	80	110	70	90
October 2001 to September 2002	240	160	320	100	150	80	70
October 2002 to September 2003	350	180	340	100	190	80	40
October 2003 to September 2004	400	150	250	90	260	100	
Total	1,860	1,120	1,560	470	920	490	250

Notes:
1. New Deal for Young People data is from January 1998 to September 2004.
2. New Deal 25 plus data is from July 1998 to September 2004.
3. New Deal for Lone Parents data is from October 1998 to September 2004.
4. New Deal 50 plus data is from April 2000 to March 2003. New Deal 50 plus data is not available at constituency level after March 2003 when the New Deal 50 plus Employment Credit ended.
5. Information is not available at constituency level for New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners.
6. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and components may not sum to totals.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate

Occupational Pension Schemes

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether employers who run defined benefit occupational pension schemes are entitled to make unilateral changes to accrual rates in respect of future service; and what rights scheme members have to object in such circumstances. [212018]

Malcolm Wicks: Employers running occupational pension schemes are subject to their individual scheme rules. Schemes can make unilateral changes to future accrual rates if their scheme rules do not prohibit such changes and the accrual rates continue to meet the minimum requirements set out in the Reference Scheme Test. Unless there are provisions in the scheme rules giving scheme members the right to object, they currently have no right to object.

The Pensions Act 2004 will place a statutory obligation on employers to consult scheme members before making major changes to future pension arrangements. The consultation on draft regulations will start later this year and we aim to implement this requirement from April 2006.

Poverty (Stoke-on-Trent)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households in poverty there were in Stoke-on-Trent in each year since 1997. [209898]

Malcolm Wicks: Poverty is about more than low income; it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in 'Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03'. Data are not available below the regional level and are available only as proportions at the regional level. It should be noted that the reporting of year-on-year changes in the regional low-income rates are not reliable.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

Return to Work

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to help disabled people within the Greater London area return to work; and if he will make a statement. [206190]

Maria Eagle: Although there is nothing specific to London, there are a number of programmes designed to help disabled people return to work which are available to disabled people within the Greater London area.

Since 1 October 2004 the employment provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) have applied to all employers, with the exception of the armed forces.

The ending of the exclusion from the employment provisions of employers with fewer than 15 staff brings into coverage a further one million small employers with seven million further jobs in which 600,000 disabled people already work.

During 2004 the Department undertook a major campaign to raise awareness of the DDA particularly among small and medium-sized businesses. Around a million businesses were directly mailed information; this was supported by radio advertising, press articles in specialist and trade press and website fact sheets. A free information pack with video is also available and the second presentation of the 'Access All Areas' awards, which congratulates small service providers who have made services more accessible, took place in November 2004.

Initiatives which seek to enhance the employability of disabled people include the use of Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers who visit employers and advise them on the support and help available in the employment of disabled people and the Job Introduction Scheme (JIS) which aims to increase employment opportunities for people with disabilities by offering a weekly grant, currently £75 per week, to employers during the first six weeks of their employment.

New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) is designed to support people in receipt of disability or health-related benefits in finding and sustaining paid employment. It is delivered through a network of Job Brokers across England, Scotland and Wales who agree with each customer what is the most appropriate route into employment for them and work closely with providers of training and other provision where the customer needs additional help. NDDP Job Brokers were introduced in July 2001 and to September 2004 the programme showed 115,930 registrations with Job Brokers and over 54,000 job entries.

In addition there are a number of other programmes designed to help disabled people return to work which are available to disabled people within the Greater London area.

Access to Work is a specialist disability programme which provides practical advice and support to help disabled people enter or stay in paid employment. The support is aimed at overcoming work related obstacles resulting from disability. It does this through a system of grants towards the cost of providing support. Access to Work is open to those who are employed as well as people moving out of unemployment and is a highly effective job retention measure.

Work Preparation is a highly flexible programme open to benefit recipients (incapacity or unemployment-related benefits) and non-benefit recipients. It is an individually tailored, work-focused programme that enables disabled people to address barriers associated with their disability and prepare for work with the confidence necessary to achieve and sustain their job goals. The vast majority of Work Preparation programmes take the form of short unpaid work placements.

WORKSTEP was introduced in April 2001 to modernise the former Supported Employment Programme. It provides job support to over 30,000 people in employment and in this financial year up to October 2004 just under 900 clients had progressed into open unsupported work. In 2003–04 it held a budget of £163 million, and it is delivered by over 200 providers, including Remploy, in England, Scotland and Wales. WORKSTEP is managed by Jobcentre Plus and involves a three-way partnership between the employer, the WORKSTEP provider and a disabled person.

People receiving incapacity benefit can do permitted work and keep benefit in some circumstances. The pre-Budget report announced new national measures for improving permitted work provision including an extension of the initial period of permitted work from 26 weeks to 52 weeks in all cases and an expansion of permitted work provisions to people facing the greatest barriers to full-time employment.

People with the most limiting conditions such as advanced progressive conditions will be covered by a widened version of the permitted work provisions and be able to work for a longer period of time while maintaining their entitlement to benefit. The new measures will improve take-up and provide better support on entry to permitted work through face-to-face meetings with personal advisers including a requirement for clients to consider the prospects of a move into full-time employment, but only where they are able to do so.

Social Fund

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* Community Care Grants, *(b)* Crisis Loans and *(c)* Budgeting Loans in helping homeless people move from temporary to permanent accommodation. [209642]

Malcolm Wicks: There has been no specific study on the effectiveness of the social fund on helping homeless people move from temporary to permanent accommodation. However, we know from more general research that the discretionary social fund is used by people in these circumstances.

DWP research report 139 "The use of the social fund by families with children" contains secondary analysis of the Families and Children study and the Family Resources Survey. This study found that moving home is one of the three main trigger events for social fund loan applications and the main trigger event for lone parents. We can guarantee a Budgeting Loan payment to help people in these circumstances, provided the applicant satisfies the eligibility criteria.

Community Care Grants (CCGs) are also available to help people with the cost of setting up home. In particular it is available to people leaving institutional care, families under exceptional pressure, and people taking part in a planned programme of resettlement. These can include former rough sleepers, families fleeing domestic violence and ex-prisoners. However, as the CCG scheme is discretionary and cash-limited, there can be no guarantee of payment.

We believe that the social fund provides valuable support to the poorest and most vulnerable people in society, including those in temporary accommodation, which is why an additional £90 million has been made available to the discretionary fund over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06. This has allowed the Community Care Grant budget to be increased from £108 million in 2002–03 to £128 million for 2004–05.

We have recently announced that we intend to abolish the Budgeting Loan 'double debt' rule and reduce the standard repayment rate of 15 per cent. of a customer's benefit to 12 per cent. from April 2006. These changes will make budgeting loans more consistent and easier to understand and access, and will improve the help available to those who are setting up home, in particular many of those who have outstanding social fund debt.

To support these changes the Social Fund loans budget will be increased by £210 million over the three years 2006–07 to 2008–09.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his review of the Social Fund; and when he expects it to be completed. [209641]

Malcolm Wicks: The Social Fund plays an important role in the Government's commitment to tackling poverty and social exclusion. It provides support to millions of people on low incomes, including some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

The Social Fund is continually under review and we have announced a number of improvements. For example, £90 million is being added to the Discretionary Social Fund budget over the three years to 2005–06.

We have recently announced that we intend to abolish the Budgeting Loan 'double debt' rule and reduce the standard repayment rate of 15 per cent. of a customers benefit to 12 per cent., from April 2006. These changes will make Budgeting Loans more consistent and easier to understand and the Social Fund more effective in assisting those families most likely to experience overindebtedness. To support these changes the Social Fund loans budget will be increased by £210 million over the three years 2006–07 to 2008–09.

The Government are also looking at ways in which more affordable loans can be made available to people on low incomes, and is seeking to work in partnership with the private and voluntary sectors to find ways of delivering these, while ensuring that the loans enhance the ability of people to manage their finances responsibly.

We will continue to look at ways in which the Social Fund can be made more effective and contribute to our vision of greater financial inclusion.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Social Fund *(a)* Community Care Grant, *(b)* Crisis Loans and *(c)* Budgeting Loan applications were received in Tower Hamlets in each of the last five years; how many were successful in each case; and what the total expenditure was in each case. [209645]

Malcolm Wicks: Social Fund data are held by Social Fund District or Jobcentre Plus District, so data are unavailable at borough level.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Social Fund *(a)* Community Care Grant, *(b)* Crisis Loan and *(c)* Budgeting Loan applications were received in each Government office region in 2003–04; how many were successful in each case; and what the total expenditure was in each case. [209646]

Malcolm Wicks: Social Fund data were formerly held at Social Fund District level and are now held at Jobcentre Plus District level. These changes occurred gradually over two years and resulted from a number of boundary changes. Parts of some districts formed parts of one or more Government office regions (GOR) at different times. As such data are not available by GOR.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) when the regional review of the social fund telephone system will be published; [210097]

(2) what the average time taken by members of the Milton Keynes social fund team to respond to enquiries in relation to *(a)* new applications to the social fund and *(b)* old cases was in the last period for which figures are available; [210098]

(3) how many staff are employed by the Milton Keynes social fund team; [210099]

(4) what the performance of the Milton Keynes social fund team against targets set for processing new social fund claims has been in each year since 2001. [210101]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, David Anderson. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from David Anderson to Mr. Paul Goodman, dated 31 January 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the regional review of the Social Fund telephone system for the South East region, the average response times to enquiries made in relation to applications to the Social Fund at Milton Keynes, how many staff there are on the team and their performance against targets for processing new claims since 2001. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It is not our intention to publish details of the review of the Social Fund telephone system as this is an internal review. However, we would be prepared to share local findings with you once they have been finalised and I have asked the District Manager for the Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire district to provide them to you.

The number of people employed to deliver the Milton Keynes Social Fund service is 39.

The following tables show performance against Average Actual Clearance Times (AACT) and accuracy targets for the period for which figures are available.

AACT is the measure for the time taken to process claims and represents the average time taken to clear all claims over the year The time taken is measured from the date the claim is received to the date it is fully processed.

	Target	*Achievement*
April 2002 to March 2003		
SF crisis loans	100 per cent. same day	98.2 per cent.
SF budget loans	95 per cent. within 20 days	99.5 per cent.
	AACT in 8 days	3.7 days
SF community care grants	95 per cent. within 20 days	96.1 per cent.
	AACT in 9 days[1]	7.2 days
SF sure start maternity grants	95 per cent.	99 per cent.
	AACT in 5 days	4.4 days
SF funeral payments	90 per cent. in 35 days	98 per cent.
	AACT in 16 days	12.5 days
SF accuracy	75 per cent.	76 per cent.
April 2003 to March 2004		
SF crisis loans	Same day	98 per cent.
SF budget loans	AACT in 8 days	8.2 days
SF community care grants	AACT in 9 days[1]	8.2 days
SF sure start maternity grants	AACT in 5 days	9.6 days
SF funeral payments	AACT in 16 days	18.2 days
SF accuracy	75 per cent.	93.3 per cent.

	Target	*Achievement*
April 2004 to December 2004		
SF crisis loans	AACT in 2 days[1]	1.27 days
SF budget loans	AACT in 8 days[1]	10.97 days
SF community care grants	AACT in 9 days[1]	7.87 days
SF sure start maternity grants	AACT in 5 days[1]	7.63 days
SF funeral payments	AACT in 16 days[1]	16.3 days
SF accuracy	75 per cent. [1]	96.7 per cent.

[1] Nationally set Key Management Indicator.

There is no information available on the average time taken to respond to enquiries made on either new applications to the Social Fund or old cases.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* sickness and absence and *(b)* turnover rates for Social Fund staff were in the latest period for which figures are available. [212056]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available specifically for Social Fund staff.

State Pension

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the merits of a specific old-age pensioner cost of living index for generating annual increases in state retirement pension. [211178]

Malcolm Wicks: Pensioner Indices, covering pensioners who receive over three-quarters of their income from state pensions and benefits, are produced as part of the Consumer Price Indices in the Retail Prices Index.

Over the period 1997 to 2004, the Pensioners Indices for a single pensioner have increased by 10.6 per cent., whereas the Retail Prices Index has increased by 18.5 per cent. and the Retail Prices Index excluding housing costs by 17.6 per cent. over the same period.

Pensioner Indices are not used to calculate State Pension increases because the Retail Prices Index is a clearer and understandable index that is well trusted and an accepted measure of price increases.

However, in the recent past this Government has increased the basic State Pension by more than the Retail Prices Index.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many pensioners do not receive the full basic state pension because of their contribution records; and by what aggregate amount their pensions fall short of the basic level; [211828]

(2) how many pensioners receive some form of a state pension. [211829]

Malcolm Wicks: As at 31 March 2004 there were 10.35 million pensioners in receipt of a basic State Pension of whom 6.65 million received a full rate basic State Pension with 3.7 million receiving less than the full amount.

The aggregated difference for this group is estimated to be £5.3 billion for 2003–04.

There are some 10.42 million pensioners who receive some form of state pension.

Notes:

1. Full rate means the standard rate of a Category A or B basic state pension based on a person's own or late spouse's national insurance contributions—£77.45 for a Category A pension in 2003–04.

2. State pension means Category A, B, C or D state pension or graduated retirement benefit.

3. The estimated aggregated difference figure is a cash estimate for 2003–04.

4. Numbers of state pensioners are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.

5. Numbers of state pensioners, which are for GB only, are rounded to the nearest 10 thousand, while the estimated aggregated difference is rounded to the nearest 100 million.

Source:

IAD Information Centre 5 per cent. sample

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost in each of the 10 financial years from 2006–07, net of savings in means-tested benefits and additional income tax revenues, of paying from April 2006 a basic state pension to all single people aged 75 years or above at the rate of the guarantee credit for single people regardless of contribution record, and a basic state pension to all couples where one or both partners is aged 75 years or above at the rate of the guarantee credit for couples, with that pension being indexed to earnings in subsequent years, and assuming that the savings credit is abolished for those aged 75 years or above, on the basis of the assumption that additional payments will be made to any groups who would otherwise lose out in order to ensure that there are no cash losers; and if he will make a statement. [212019]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the form requested.

For the main part of the costs I refer the hon. Member for Northavon to the reply I gave to him on 22 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 1310W.

It is estimated that in 2006–07 some 300,000 single people or couples may lose net income of around £10 per week.

1. Figures are in 2004–05 prices and have been estimated using the department's Policy Simulation Model for 2006–07. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest 100,000.

2. Estimates are based on an assessment of changes in entitlement to benefits, and they do not make any allowance for take-up of Income-Related Benefits. The estimate of costs given in the response of 22 June 2004 does allow for differences in take-up.

Tax Credits

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate the Department has made of the number of people in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* the Moray local authority area seeking (i) financial and (ii) other assistance in JobCentre Plus outlets as a result of Inland Revenue tax credit overpayment recovery procedures since April 2004; and if he will make a statement. [209876]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will amend qualifying arrangements for winter fuel payments so that those whose 60th birthday falls shortly after the qualifying week but before the onset of winter qualify for the payment. [211644]

Malcolm Wicks: We have no current plans to amend the qualifying arrangements for winter fuel payments.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed winter fuel allowance in each of the past seven years. [211714]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of winter fuel payments made in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Carbon Monoxide

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in implementing the Health and Safety Commission and Executive's recommendations of 2000 relating to carbon monoxide and the gas supply industry; and if she will make a statement. [211695]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

The HSC's fundamental review of the gas safety regime 1999–2000 addressed a wide range of issues, including carbon monoxide poisoning. Of the 49 recommendations made, almost half have been implemented. Action has been taken on the remainder, with the exception of four that are either not yet due or rely on other work being completed. Some of the recommendations were drafted with a continuing obligation and so cannot be deemed as completed.

In the light of HSC's subsequent strategy "Workplace Health and Safety in Great Britain to 2010 and Beyond", published in February 2004 and endorsed by the Government, HSE is seeking to develop new ways of partnering with the relevant stakeholders to secure continuing consumer gas safety through a sensible approach to risk. The Government have decided that HSE should retain its responsibilities for the regulatory regime.

Carbon Sequestration

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential for oil-related infrastructure in the North Sea to be used for carbon sequestration purposes; what steps she is taking to encourage such use; and if she will make a statement. [210851]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 25 January 2005]*: A DTI study, completed in May 2004, looked at the feasibility of CO_2 enhanced oil recovery in the North Sea and published its findings in "Implementing a Demonstration of Enhanced Oil Recovery using Carbon Dioxide" (DTI Pub URN 04/1028). This study evaluated the potential for CO_2 injection into our North Sea oil fields for the purposes of carbon sequestration together with Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR). Our studies show that there are several operating fields where this can be technically feasible. However the cost of CO_2 captured and delivered to these sites and the capital costs involved are high, and none of these schemes have been shown to be commercially feasible under the current economic conditions.

We plan to publish a Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy to address the future requirements for reducing carbon dioxide emissions from large-scale sources in the UK and storage in geological structures such as those in the North Sea. This strategy will reconsider the potential for using CO_2 for EOR and eventual sequestration in the North Sea. The strategy is due to be published within the next few weeks.

Companies Entering Administration

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations her Department has received about companies and directors that intentionally make their companies go into administration and start trading again under a similar name. [211593]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The changes to administration introduced by the Enterprise Act 2002 have been generally welcomed. The primary objectives of an administration are to seek to rescue the company as a going concern, or to achieve a better result for the creditors as a whole than would be likely if the company were wound up.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are in place to prevent companies and directors running a company in such a way that it is forced to go into administration. [211702]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Administration is not necessarily a bad thing; it can result in the survival of a company when it gets into financial difficulty. An administrator is under a duty to report to the Secretary of State on the conduct of directors of companies which enter administration. A director can be disqualified from acting in the management of a company for between two and 15 years if there is evidence to prove that they are unfit to run a company.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department takes to ensure that consumers are aware that a company they are dealing with has recently gone into administration. [211703]

Mr. Sutcliffe: When a company enters administration the administrator has to advertise his appointment in the Gazette and once in a newspaper that he thinks is most appropriate for ensuring that the appointment comes to the notice of the company's creditors. Details of the appointment are also placed on the company's file at Companies House, which is publicly available information.

Every invoice, order for goods or services and business letters issued by or on behalf of the company or the administrator must state the name of the administrator and that the affairs, business and property of the company are being managed by him.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent on entertainment by her Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204344]

Ms Hewitt: Information on entertainment expenditure broken down as requested is not available. However, the table shows the total expenditure on entertainment by the Department of Trade and Industry in each year between 1998–99 and 2003–04. Information on spend for 1997–98 would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Most of the Department's entertainment expenditure represents the hosting of stakeholder events both in the UK and overseas. This includes refreshments at meetings, working breakfasts and lunches and official events.

All expenditure of official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government accounting.

Total expenditure on entertainment

	£000
1999–2000	887
2001–01	1,089
2001–02	1,165
2002–03	1,311
2003–04	1,110

Digital Conversion

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support the Government have given to development of the digital tick kitemark indicating digitally compatible products and services amongst manufacturers and retailers. [211435]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The digital switchover logo, which brands reliable sources of information about digital switchover, and identifies products and services that meet agreed criteria related to switchover, was created by the Digital Television Project, a partnership between Government, broadcasters, industry, consumer groups and other stakeholders. The development of the logo was the responsibility of the Market Preparation Group, under the Digital Television Action Plan.

The logo is owned by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. The DTI licenses its use by trained retailers in conjunction with a point-of-sale consumer information leaflet. The DTI also licenses manufacturers of digital receivers, recorders, and aerials in accordance with agreed specifications. The DTI owns the licensing scheme, and is providing seedcorn funding to it. We are working with the aerial installation industries to establish a link between licensed use of the switchover logo, and the holding of a new vocational qualification, by means of a registered digital installer scheme.

The DTI has applied for certification mark status for the logo, to ensure the appropriate legal protection for the logo and its users. The licensing scheme will be supported by compliance monitoring, in line with requirements for having the logo confirmed as a certification mark. The DTI has also informed Trading Standards organisations about the logo and the requirements of the scheme.

Domestic Fuel Oil

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many oil installers and servicers in the UK are registered with Oftec. [211044]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

5,200 firms are registered.

Business Link

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her Department's total spending on rebranding the Business Link service was; and how much of the total spending was on external consultants. [210281]

Ms Hewitt: This rebranding work was carried out as part of a wider programme of development of the Business Link service. This work cost £67,000 and this amount has been spent with an external specialist branding consultant.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people she estimates are fuel poor in *(a)* England and *(b)* Stoke-on-Trent. [211709]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: For the most recently available fuel poverty figures for England, I would refer my hon. Friend to the response which I gave to the hon. Member for Gordon (Malcolm Bruce) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 78W. This sets out how the fuel poverty figures for England are produced, and gives figures for each Government office region.

We are unable to provide a breakdown of the number of households in fuel poverty by individual towns

Hydrogen Economy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions she has had with the US Administration with regard to movement towards a hydrogen-based economy; and what joint research with the hydrogen economy is being undertaken. [210927]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK, like the US, participates in various multi-lateral fora dealing with hydrogen energy. These include the US-led International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy (IPHE), the International Energy Agency (IEA) Hydrogen Coordination Group and the IEA Hydrogen Implementing Agreement. These provide mechanisms for international collaborative research and development to support the transition to a hydrogen economy.

Technology has been one of the key themes of the on-going energy dialogue between the US and the UK. There has been a particular focus on hydrogen, leading to a major conference held in London in November last year. At that conference, I announced the opening of a hydrogen scholarship scheme under which up to five British researchers per year will be able to spend time engaged in hydrogen research with US scientists at the Sandia National Laboratory in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research the Government *(a)* are undertaking and *(b)* have commissioned on the conversion of (i) oil and (ii) nuclear energy to a hydrogen-based economy. [211605]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Last year the DTI commissioned a study to develop a strategic framework for hydrogen energy activities in the UK. This was undertaken by E4tech, Element Energy and Eoin Lees Energy and was completed in December. A report of their analysis has been placed on the DTI's Sustainable Energy Policy Network website. We will be considering the specific recommendations carefully, and will publish these, together with our response, by the end of February 2005.

The analysis has found that for the UK six hydrogen energy chains could provide cost competitive carbon abatement together with enhanced upstream energy security by 2030. All six chains are for transport applications using fuel cell powered vehicles. The six chains are:

Biomass to hydrogen

Renewable electricity to hydrogen

Nuclear electricity to hydrogen

Natural gas to hydrogen with carbon capture and storage

Coal to hydrogen with carbon capture and storage

Novel hydrogen production routes.

Online Shopping Fraud

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if the Government will investigate the effectiveness of measures to prevent fraud in online shopping transactions; [205549]

(2) what powers there are to protect online shoppers from fraud; [205550]

(3) what steps the Government plans to take to make internet shopping more secure. [210010]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government work with the police and industry to tackle fraud and other online crime through a number of initiatives. A key factor in dealing with online fraud is prevention and education and the Government take an active role in educating computer users about the risks of fraud committed through the internet. The Home Office website provides advice on avoiding internet fraud and the Home Office has also created, and maintains the 'e-tailing mini site', which forms part of the crime reduction website. The mini site provides information to help both businesses and consumers protect themselves specifically when using the internet.

The Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 protect consumers against payment card fraud including credit cards. The Regulations apply to contracts made at a distance including online ones. The card issuer is required to reimburse consumers the full amount in the event of fraudulent use of the consumer's card.

In addition, the Consumer Credit Act 1974 also allows consumers to recover the cost of a purchase made by credit card from either the supplier or the credit card provider. This provides additional protection should a consumer be unable to trace the company they were dealing with over the internet. The Banking Code stipulates that consumers' liability for misuse of a card will be limited unless there is evidence that they have acted fraudulently or without reasonable care.

Through the Department of Trade and Industry's Safe Internet Shopping initiative consumers have access to information on how to shop online safely. Consumers need to be aware of security features on websites and to look for a closed padlock sign when they are asked for personal details. The Consumer Direct website at www.consumerdirect.gov.uk also offers advice on internet auctions, online scams and information on a range of consumer-related issues.

The Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 are included in a list of EC Directives, which is part of the Injunctions Directive. The Injunctions Directive requires all member states to have in place arrangements, which will allow certain unlawful actions harmful to consumers to be stopped in good time. The Injunctions Directive allows consumer protection bodies designated by the member states to apply to the courts or competent administrative authorities for orders to require traders to cease conduct that constitutes a breach of any of the consumer protection directives specified. Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002 implements the Injunctions Directive in the UK.

Co-operation arrangements exist to ensure we can tackle scams that cross borders. In Europe member states have just agreed a Regulation (Consumer Protection Co-operation) to ensure that all consumer protection enforcement agencies are working closely together to combat cross border scams, and 30 OECD countries have all signed up to a co-operation agreement to tackle cross border fraud that affects consumers. The International Consumer Protection Enforcement Network (ICPEN) is a network of consumer protection enforcement agencies in over 30 countries that exists to facilitate cross border co-operation on cross border scams and consumer fraud.

The Home Office has published, jointly with the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) a leaflet on card safety, which includes a section on using cards safely over the internet. The leaflet has been sent to all police forces in England and Wales, and to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. It is also available on the Home Office website and the e-tailing mini site, and APACS members (banks) will be sending a version of the leaflet to their cardholders.

The Home Office is represented on an industry-led Steering Group, which aims to tackle 'Card Not Present' (CNP) fraud (which includes fraud over the internet). We support practical measures being introduced by the industry to increase levels of security for internet transactions. These include Address Verification Services (AVS) and Card Security Code (CSC), along with Mastercard Secure Code and Verified by Visa which require password verification for internet transactions. These initiatives are already making a significant impact on CNP Fraud. The work of the CNP Steering Group has also led to the production of a manual (Spot and Stop Card Fraud Retailer Pack), which aims to educate merchants on the dangers of CNP fraud and the steps which can be taken to prevent it.

Government are also involved in the development of Project Endurance, an initiative that will launch an internet security public awareness campaign in spring this year. The project is an alliance of public and private sector, which brings together a number of UK Government Departments and law enforcement organisations with a number of high-profile private sector companies. This campaign is to be targeted at micro businesses and consumers, primarily aimed at helping these users gain confidence in using the internet.

We will continue to monitor and review the effectiveness of these many different initiatives.

Post Office

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the size of the rural network of post offices; and what steps her Department is taking to support the rural post office network. [211467]

Mr. Sutcliffe: According to the latest figures held by Post Office Ltd., there are currently 8,102 rural post offices in its network.

The Government have placed on Post Office Ltd. a formal obligation to maintain the rural post office network and to prevent avoidable closures of rural post offices. The direction remains in force at least until April 2006. The Government have made a major investment to support the rural network. It initially made available £450 million (£150 million a year) for the 3 years 2003–04 to 2005–06 to help the Post Office to maintain the parts of the rural post office network that could not be sustained on a commercial basis. Subject to state aid clearance it will make available a further £300 million to extend this financial support for the rural network until April 2008.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will take steps to amend the requirement to prevent avoidable closures placed on Post Office Ltd. to one that allows greater flexibility and innovation. [211468]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I am satisfied that Post Office Ltd. (POL) already has sufficient scope to allow for flexibility and innovation.

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining the rural post office network, £25 million has already been allocated to POL to run a wide range of innovative pilots. Because this activity is geared towards replacing traditional outlets with some alternative means of access rather than simply closing them, it is permitted within the scope we have set for the company to run the pilots. I have asked POL for a full report on pilot activity by the end of this year. The lessons that will emerge from these trials over the next 12 months will be crucial in informing longer-term decisions about the future shape of the rural post office network.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of Triangle and HI Europe's research findings in 2002 on 'The Impact of Post Office Closures in the Rural Community'. [211469]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. This research carried out by Triangle and HI Europe in 2002 was commissioned by Postwatch.

As made clear in the statement of my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry to this House on 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 166–68WS, the Government are making available to Post Office Ltd. (POL), subject to State Aid provisions, a further £300 million between 2006 and 2008 in order to enable well informed decisions to be taken to ensure that post office services to rural communities can be maintained on a more sustainable basis. This additional transitional funding is intended to sustain the rural post office network while work is undertaken on alternative, innovative ways of providing access to postal services.

POL currently has under way a wide ranging programme of pilot projects to examine novel, effective and efficient ways of delivering postal services. I intend to ask the company for a report on this activity by the end of the year. This report and other relevant information will inform decisions concerning long-term sustainable service delivery to rural communities.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 81W, on post office closures, when she expects Post Office Ltd. to reply to the hon. Member for Gordon; and if she will make a statement on the average time taken by Post Office Ltd. to respond to such parliamentary questions. [211692]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Royal Mail and Post Office Ltd. make every effort to issue replies to hon. Members within five working days of receiving our request for information.

It would appear that due to an administrative error the hon. Member's inquiries of 30 November 2004 were not passed on to David Mills' office at Post Office Ltd. for a direct reply. This has now been done and a response will be sent direct to the hon. Member within the next few days.

Public Information Expenditure

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much her Department spent on providing *(a)* printed public information and *(b)* other public information in the last year for which figures are available; and what public information her Department provides, broken down by type of medium in which it is provided. [209721]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is not held centrally in the form required and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Regulation

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on her plans to reduce regulation. [209935]

Ms Hewitt: The DTI's plans to reduce regulatory burdens have been set out in the five-year programme, which I launched on 17 November 2004.

Royal Mail

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of Royal Mail's performance against its licence targets for the first quarter of 2004–05; and if she will make a statement; [211465]

(2) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* quality of service and *(b)* recorded performance of Royal Mail in the CH postcode area. [211466]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Royal Mail's quality of service both nationally and in the CH postcode area was below the targets in the first quarter of 2004–05, when performance was affected by the massive restructuring taking place at Royal Mail. Improving the quality of postal services throughout the country is an operational matter for the Royal Mail Board. I have been assured by Allan Leighton that this is the Board's top priority and Adam Crozier, Chief Executive of Royal Mail, has taken personal responsibility for this improvement.

I am very pleased that Royal Mail has improved its performance both nationally and in the CH postcode area since the first quarter of 2004–05. In quarter 2, 92.1 per cent. of 1st class mail was delivered nationally the next day, just below the target of 92.5 per cent. and up from 88.6 per cent. in April. In the CH postcode area, 92.1 per cent. of 1st class mail was also delivered the next day in quarter 2, up from 87.3 per cent. in April.

SME Support

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support is being provided to small and medium-sized enterprises for trade and investment abroad in 2004–05; and how much was provided in 2003–04. [210656]

Nigel Griffiths: UK Trade and Investment programme budget for trade development and outward investment activities is £78.6 million. In 2003–04 expenditure under the same heading was £75.9 million. Much of this is directed at the SME sector but precise figures are not available.

Telephone Line Repairs

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions *(a)* she and *(b)* her Department has had with (i) the regulator and (ii) British Telecom concerning the time taken to restore faulty telephone lines to vulnerable people. [211184]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department discussed the provision of priority fault repair services to end-users with a disability with the then regulator the Office of Telecommunications (Oftel) when the framework for Universal Service was drawn up. The provision of priority fault repair services to end-users with a disability is mandatory for all telecoms providers in the UK. The Department consulted BT on the framing of the order and considered the company's comments.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether her Department's Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211339]

Ms Hewitt: My Department's Welsh Language Scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 30 August 2000. Some elements came into operation immediately and the remainder were implemented progressively over the next 12 months.

Wind Farms

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* examined on the impact of wind farms on property values. [210476]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* Although the Department has not commissioned research into the impact of wind farms on property value, the Department is aware of the survey on the housing market and the impact of wind farms conducted by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS—2004).

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Alcohol Advertising

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will introduce legislation to ban the screening of television advertisements for alcoholic beverages before 9 pm. [211721]

Estelle Morris: No. The Government take the issue of binge drinking and alcohol misuse, particularly among young people, very seriously and accepted all the conclusions of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England. These included asking Ofcom, which has statutory responsibility for the regulation of broadcast advertising, to oversee a review of the rules on alcohol advertising. Ofcom's Code amendments were published on 1 November 2004 and came into effect from 1 January this year. These changes significantly strengthen the rules on broadcast alcohol advertising in many areas, particularly to protect the under-18s.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in her Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [211646]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has had no early retirement "scheme" as such for many years; and has no current plans to institute one. Instead individual cases are considered on their merits under the terms of the Civil Service Pension Scheme.

The table shows the overall early retirement costs for DCMS and The Royal Parks Agency from 1997–98 to 2007–08. The costs cover payments where employees have been granted enhanced early retirement, approved early retirement, or one-off compensation payments.

£

	DCMS	*RPA*
1997–98	155,272	72,919
1998–99	72,269	62,032
1999–2000	145,060	46,235
2000–01	42,000	34,494
2001–02	79,608	28,576
2002–03	58,362	20,632
2003–04	92,972	4,419
2004–05	88,000	3,436
2005–06	81,681	72,000
2006–07	49,042	25,000
2007–08	36,776	14,000

Copyright

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the *(a)* Football Association, *(b)* the Premier League and *(c)* the Football League on the effects of the recent European Court of Justice ruling on copyright. [211904]

Mr. Caborn: None.

However, my officials are aware of the European Court of Justice's ruling and are currently exploring the issue with the Football Association, the FA Premier League and Football League to identify any implications it may have on football clubs in England.

Discussions have also been held with officials at the Scottish Executive and the Department for Trade and Industry who have responsibility for copyright legislation.

Country Shows

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the estimated tax payable under the Licensing Act 2003 is by organisers of country shows which attract attendance of up to *(a)* 5,000, *(b)* 10,000 and *(c)* 15,000; and if she will make a statement. [211591]

Mr. Caborn: There is no tax payable under the Licensing Act 2003. No provisions of the 2003 Act give rise to additional tax liability for organisers of country shows. Fee levels under the 2003 Act were announced on 21 January. They have been set centrally at a level that we believe will allow the full recovery of the costs of administration, inspection and enforcement associated with the new system. There is an additional fee for premises licence applications for exceptionally large scale events (over 5,000 people) unless certain conditions apply. We met with organisers of agricultural and country shows and, on the basis of those discussions, believe from what we have been told that such events can be organised in such a way as to be unlikely to be affected by the additional fee for large scale events.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the impact on rural shows of the increased licence fees for special events. [210480]

Mr. Caborn: We have had useful discussions with organisers of agricultural and country shows and believe from what we have been told that they can be organised in a way so that they are unlikely to be affected by the additional fee for large events. The same should be true for outdoor sports events, flower shows and other popular events that are not in themselves licensable. Where events include licensable activities, we are confident that the events may be organised so that those activities can, in the main, be licensed separately and not therefore trigger the additional fee.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* organisers of rural shows and *(b)* rural local authorities on the increased licence fees for special events. [210481]

Mr. Caborn: The draft fee levels payable under the Licensing Act 2003 were subject to a public consultation which ended on 23 December 2004. Views from parties with an interest in fee levels have been considered, including from organisers of rural shows and rural local authorities. In addition we met the Country Land and Business Association and the Association of Show and Agricultural Organisations and concluded, on the basis of those discussions, that they are unlikely to be affected by the additional fees for large-scale events.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many contracts in her Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if she will make a statement. [211610]

Mr. Caborn: My Department has let no contracts to either EDS or Fujitsu in the last two years.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli, Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli, Pembrokeshire of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211323]

Mr. Caborn: Most of the matters for which the Department is responsible in England have been devolved in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales. However, there are some reserved areas in which the Government has introduced initiatives which affect Preseli Pembrokeshire.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality and original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and S4C, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licenses for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Preseli Pembrokeshire with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 4,835.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on New Year's Eve to 11 am on New Year's Day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement) Order 2003 repealed those parts of the Licensing Act 1964 which allowed the local government electorate in the counties and county boroughs of Wales to requisition polls to decide whether licensed premises should be allowed to open on Sundays. This has removed the uncertainty which businesses in Wales, including those in Preseli Pembrokeshire, faced, allowing them to exercise long-term planning. It also removes a costly administrative burden on local authorities and an artificial difference in licensing controls between Wales and England, which prevented businesses and customers exercising freedom of choice.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licences and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licences for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Preseli Pembrokeshire, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

No statistics are available for international visits or expenditure by constituency. However, VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination benefit all parts of the country, including Preseli Pembrokeshire.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Preseli Pembrokeshire has benefited from over 430 awards totalling over £17.8 million. Of these, 63 awards worth over £3.7 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Digital Conversion

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the statement in the recent report by the Ofcom Consumer Panel that, though financial barriers to digital conversion exist, they are of secondary importance, represents Government policy. [211367]

Estelle Morris: The independent Ofcom Consumer Panel report published in November gave views on what help may be necessary to ensure the interests of the most vulnerable consumers are protected. We are considering the recommendations in the Panel's report and will be responding in due course.

European Audiovisual Observatory

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her Department's policy towards European Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory; what activities the Observatory undertakes; and at what cost. [211362]

Mr. Caborn: The Department welcomes and supports European Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory. The aim of the Observatory is to improve the transfer, and promote transparency of information in the audiovisual industry in Europe. The Observatory analyses and distributes a wide range of statistics, as well as data on economic, legal and financial matters concerning the film, TV, DVD/video and new media industries in the organisation's member countries. The European Audiovisual Observatory Budget for 2005 totals EUR 2,311,000.

Football Stadiums

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will meet representatives of the Stand Up Sit Down campaign to discuss standing at football matches; and if she will make a statement. [210986]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have always made their position on standing at football matches very clear—specifically that the grounds of the clubs in the top two divisions of football should remain all-seated.

While the Department has no plans at present to meet representatives from the Stand Up Sit Down campaign, the Football Licensing Authority (FLA), our advisers on safety at football grounds, met them on 20 January 2005 to discuss their proposals.

Free Television Licences

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Warrington, South are in receipt of free television licences. [211404]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, which administers free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Warrington, South constituency in 2003–04 was 4,850, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Historic Sites (Babylon)

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what reports the Government have received on damage done to historic sites in Babylon; and if she will make a statement. [210094]

Tessa Jowell: I have studied the report prepared by John Curtis of the British Museum on the damage caused to the site of Babylon. In addition to that report, my officials have kept closely in touch with Foreign and Commonwealth Office officials on matters relating to the protection of Iraq's heritage.

I have also offered to help meet the cost of three interns coming to the UK from the Iraqi Ministry of Culture to learn the skills that will be necessary for the future management of the Babylon site and have confirmed this in my recent discussion with Mr. Muffeed Al Jazairi, the Iraqi Minister of Culture. The UK also remains committed to the terms of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, which stressed that all parties need to respect and protect Iraq's archaeological, historical, cultural and religious heritage.

Liquor Licensing

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the net costs to local authorities of administering liquor licensing under the Licensing Act 2003. [209889]

Mr. Caborn: Fee levels under the Licensing Act 2003 were announced on Friday 21 January. They will be set centrally at a level that we believe will allow the full recovery of the costs of administration, inspection and enforcement associated with the new system. Therefore, we anticipate that there will be no net costs for local authorities. However, we will monitor the situation and establish an independent review of the fees and costs once the new system is in operation.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* the alcohol industry regarding the proposed annual fees for liquor licensing. [209734]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, and I have met the Local Government Association, Association of London Government, Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services and individual local authorities to discuss the fee levels to be made under the Licensing Act 2003. We have had no formal discussions with the alcohol industry about the fee levels. The proposed fees were subject to a public consultation between 4 November and 23 December 2004 to which we received 124 responses from industry and their representatives. These responses were fully considered before decisions on the fees were made. The fee levels were announced by the Secretary of State on 21 January and the relevant regulations were laid before Parliament on 20 January.

London Olympic Bid

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many times since May 2003 *(a)* she and *(b)* Ministers from her Department have visited (i) Newham, (ii) Tower Hamlets, (iii) Hackney and (iv) Waltham Forest in connection with the 2012 Olympic bid. [210483]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I have visited Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Waltham Forest on five separate occasions since May 2003 in relation to London's 2012 Olympic bid. The Department and London 2012 are in regular contact with the representatives of all London boroughs—in particular the Olympic boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Greenwich.

National Lottery

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidelines she gives to the National Lottery board about the criteria for making grants; and if she will make a statement. [211535]

Estelle Morris: Lottery distributors are, and are intended to be, independent of Government, but they are obliged to take account of policy and financial directions issued to them by the Secretary of State, when making funding decisions. These directions set out the framework for the wider aims of lottery funding. Copies of the policy directions have been deposited in the Library of the House.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202262]

Mr. Caborn: Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, total domestic travel and subsistence claims by DCMS special advisers came to £1,156.93. No foreign travel was undertaken during this period. The number of occasions and places visited are not held in an accessible form. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 her special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207173]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State on 17 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 566.

Sports and Community Clubs

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from the Central Council of Physical Recreation and other bodies about the proposed levels of licensing fees for sports and community clubs. [211741]

Mr. Caborn: The Department received representations from a number of sports bodies, including the Central Council of Physical Recreation, in response to its consultation on draft fees for the new licensing regime. Their views were considered along with representations we received from local authorities and other bodies, as well as individuals. The fees were laid in Parliament on 20 January and copies are in the House Libraries. Further correspondence was received from sports-related bodies when the consultation period ended.

Sports Funding

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much central Government funding has been allocated to sport in each year since 1994. [211903]

Mr. Caborn: Figures for central Government funding for sport are shown in the tables.

Figures shown are outturn, except those for 2004–05, which are plans.

£ million

	1994–95	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
Great Britain Sports Council[1]	49.357	49.250	27.679	—	—	—
English Sports Council[1]	—	—	15.679	33.730	33.290	34.150
UK Sports Council[1]	—	—	4.000	11.800	11.600	12.600
Football Licensing Authority	0.870	0.896	0.896	0.896	0.792	0.920
Sportsmatch	3.300	3.700	3.200	3.200	3.200	3.370
Sports Aid Foundation	0.020	—	—	—	—	—
Children's Play	—	—	0.375	0.400	0.400	0.484
British Chess Federation[2]	—	—	0.049	0.049	0.049	0.046
Other sport support	—	0.100	—	0.050	0.030	0.020
Commonwealth Games Ceremonies	—	—	—	—	—	—
Step into Sport	—	—	—	—	—	—
Lee Valley Regional Centre (Pickett's Lock)	—	—	—	—	—	—
Capital support for Wembley National Stadium	—	—	—	—	—	—
Space for Sport and the Arts	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	53.547	53.946	51.878	50.125	49.361	51.590

£ million

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Great Britain Sports Council[1]	—	—	—	—	—
English Sports Council[1]	34.950	39.730	76.649	44.572	69.570
UK Sports Council[1]	12.750	16.770	16.321	23.175	27.310
Football Licensing Authority	0.940	0.941	0.955	2.128	1.125
Sportsmatch	3.370	3.550	3.675	3.675	3.675
Sports Aid Foundation	—	—	—	—	—
Children's Play	0.495	0.496	0.498	0.500	0.500
British Chess Federation[2]	0.053	0.050	0.055	0.060	0.060
Other sport support	0.010	—	1.039	0.419	0.940
Commonwealth Games Ceremonies	—	2.476	8.301	—	—
Step into Sport	—	—	2.271	3.667	4.000
Lee Valley Regional Centre (Pickett's Lock)	—	—	—	0.188	—
Capital support for Wembley National Stadium	—	—	—	—	6.000
Space for Sport and the Arts	0.013	0.579	10.100	40.850	—
Total	52.581	64.592	119.864	119.234	113.180

[1] On 1 January 1997 the UK Sports Council and the English Sports Council replaced the Great Britain Sports Council.

[2] Until April 1996 funding for the British Chess Federation was provided by the Department for Education and Employment.

Sports Participation

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment has been made by Sport England of the levels of participation in sport by children outside school age. [211743]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England has not carried out or commissioned any formal research on this age group, however, the following data taken from the Health Survey for England (HSE) 2002 shows the percentage of two to five-year-olds, by age and sex, who participated in a sport and exercise activity on at least one day in the seven days before interview. The survey does not measure activities within school.

Percentage

Age	*Male*	*Female*
2	31	36
3	29	44
4	42	45
5	53	50

Source:
Health Survey for England 2002

Figures taken from the General Household Survey (GHS) for 2002 show that 72 per cent. of 16 to 19-year-olds participated in at least one sport, game or physical activity, excluding walking, in the four weeks before interview. However, the survey does not distinguish between those in this age group who are in full-time education and those that are not.

DCMS, in partnership with its NDPBs including Sport England, will shortly be commissioning a new survey to gather information on participation and attendance from individuals, including older children, in private households in England.

Tourism

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on Government support for the tourism industry in the last financial year. [210900]

Mr. Caborn: Grant in aid from the Department to VisitBritain totalled £45.9 million in 2003–04, of which £35.5 million was allocated to promoting Britain overseas, and £10.4 million to promoting England within Britain.

In addition, the Greater London Authority received grant in aid of £1.9 million from my Department for the promotion of tourism in 2003–04.

Regional support for tourism is the responsibility of the nine English Regional Development Agencies, which together allocated a total of £58.9 million for that purpose in 2003–04 from their central Government funding.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people are employed in the tourism sector. [211553]

Mr. Caborn: As at June 2003 there were 2.2 million people working in the tourism-related industries in Great Britain. Tourism employment estimates are regularly published in the National Statistics series 'Labour Market Trends'.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what percentage of gross domestic product was accounted for by the tourism industry in the last year for which figures are available; and what the change in percentage of gross domestic product has been in each of the last 10 years. [211554]

Mr. Caborn: The available data for tourism's contribution to total United Kingdom gross value added (GVA) are shown in the table.

	Tourism GVA as a percentage of UK GVA
2000	3.8
2001	3.6
2002	3.5
2003	3.4

Industry-specific data are available only for GVA, not GDP. GDP differs from GVA in that subsidies on products are subtracted and taxes are added to yield estimates of GDP, but these flows are estimated at the whole economy level only.

These figures are sourced from the 'UK Tourism Satellite Account—First Steps Project' publication, which was completed in September 2004. The project assessed the size of the tourism industry as at 2000 and produced forward estimates of key headline indicators, based on the available data, up to 2003.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the rate of productivity in the tourism industry was in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [211556]

Mr. Caborn: The rates of productivity for the tourism industry in 2001 and 2002 are shown in the table.

	Output per worker (Percentage change on previous year)
2001	2.2
2002	3.9

Data is sourced from the Annual Business Inquiry, which uses calendar, rather than financial, years. Provisional data for 2003 was released on 16 December 2004 and will be used to update the tourism productivity figures in February.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* overseas tourists and *(b)* domestic tourists visited London in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [211557]

Mr. Caborn: The number of visits by *(a)* overseas tourists and *(b)* domestic tourists in 2002 and 2003 are shown in the table. Figures for 2004 will be published on 8 April for overseas visitors and in May for domestic visitors.

Million

	2002	*2003*
Visits by domestic tourists	16.1	14.3
Visits by overseas tourists	11.6	11.7

Source:
UK Tourism Survey, International Passenger Survey

TV Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Northern Ireland are estimated to have a television set for which there is no television licence. [210604]

Estelle Morris: The BBC have indicated that the data required to produce accurate estimates is not available for the nations and regions. However, as the hon. Member may be aware, the National Audit Office's 2002 report 'The BBC: Collecting the Television Licence Fee' indicated that the estimated evasion rate for Northern Ireland at the end of March 2001 was 17.6 per cent.

Working at Height

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the *(a)* Royal Yachting Association and *(b)* Bristol Mountaineering Council about regulations involving working at heights. [211740]

Mr. Caborn: The Working at Height regulations are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), so neither I nor the Secretary of State have conducted any discussions with either the Royal Yachting Association or the British Mountaineering Council. However, I understand that the HSE is exploring the issue and its impact upon the adventure activities sector.

CABINET OFFICE

E-government

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) how much was spent on e-government in each year from 2001 to 2004 *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by Government Department; [208648]

(2) what estimate he has made of the savings made by each Government Department in each year from 2001 to 2004 arising from the introduction of e-government services. [208519]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office does not collect information on individual Departments' spend on e-government. However, in the 2002 Spending Review, the Government committed £6 billion to the development of electronic government over a three year period.

The Spending Review 2004 (SR04) reported that significant investment in ICT in both central and local government is streamlining the delivery of services to the public, cutting transaction costs and reducing paperwork. Examples of efficiency gains can be found in the Spending Review, copies of which are available in the Library and at:

http://www.hm-Treasury.gov.uk/spending_review/spend_sr04/report/spend__sr04_repindex.cfm.

SR04 also indicated that the e-Government Unit will play a key role in accelerating and underpinning the changes necessary for the achievement of departmental efficiency gains through transactional services. The required outcome of this is efficient delivery of high quality public services resulting in a total of £1.3 billion in departmental efficiency gains over a three year period.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his office in the last three years. [207823]

Mr. Milburn: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W, by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie).

Ministerial Cars

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the average cost of providing a car and driver to enable a Government Minister to carry out official duties was in the last year for which figures are available; and what the average cost was in that year for *(a)* a Cabinet Minister and *(b)* a Minister outside the Cabinet. [208193]

Mr. Miliband: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its chief executive Mr. Nick Matheson to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Building Regulations

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what response he has received from *(a)* the Better Regulation Task Force and *(b)* the Small Business Service to (i) his proposed revision of part L of the building regulations and (ii) the proposed revised standard assessment procedure. [211586]

Phil Hope: The Government's proposals for revising the Building Regulations Part L were published for consultation last July. The consultation document which included a draft regulatory impact assessment was not referred to the Better Regulation Task Force. It was referred to the Small Business Service, which pointed to the need for the Small Firms Impact Test to be undertaken.

The Government's Standard Assessment Procedure for the Energy Rating of Dwellings is a method of calculation which is promulgated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and it is currently under review. It is not a regulatory instrument and has not been referred to the Task Force or the Small Business Service.

Business Rates

Brian Cotter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how his Department reached the assessment in the final regulatory impact assessment on the Local

Government Act 2003—Small Business Rate Relief that over 400,000 businesses would benefit from small business rate relief; [212032]

(2) how many of the hereditaments in England with a rateable value of less than £25,000 are defined as small businesses. [212033]

Mr. Raynsford: Small Business Rate Relief is applied to qualifying properties with a rateable value under £10,000 while qualifying properties under the thresholds (£15,000 outside Greater London and £21,500 inside Greater London) pay the lower small business rate multiplier.

The scheme is aimed at businesses occupying a single small property and so is not available to larger businesses with several small hereditaments (e.g. a chain of small shops, a company with many advertising rights).

About 1,017,000 hereditaments outside London have a rateable value (RV) less than £15,000 and 196,000 hereditaments within Greater London are under £21,500 RV. Because the rating list does not distinguish between those occupied by large companies with many small hereditaments from those occupied by businesses occupying a single hereditament, the Government conducted research in early 2004 on the likely eligibility for the relief. This research indicated that around 350,000 businesses would benefit. A summary of this research is on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

This figure was based on a proposed threshold of £8,000 and was revised when the threshold was set at £10,000. The new estimates indicated that about 430,000 would be eligible for the relief and this was reflected in the consultation paper and RIA as "over 400,000".

As a result of the feedback from the consultation, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister further extended the eligibility for the relief by allowing applicants to discount additional properties with a rateable value below £2,200. We estimate that this will further increase the eligibility for the relief.

Cantaxx

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the occasions on which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have communicated with Canatxx Gas Storage Ltd., Canatxx Energy Ventures Ltd. or a company associated with Canatxx (i) by letter, (ii) by e-mail, (iii) by telephone and (iv) in person; and if he will publish the content of such communication on the departmental website. [209828]

Yvette Cooper: As of 31 January 2005, we are not aware of any occasions on which Ministers or officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have communicated with Canatxx Gas Storage Ltd., Canatxx Energy Ventures Ltd. or any company known to be associated with Canatxx.

Casinos

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether casinos will remain within the D2 planning category; and if he will make a statement. [211464]

Keith Hill: After the second report of the Joint Scrutiny Committee on the Gambling Bill my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister undertook to review the possibility of a new 'use class' for casinos.

On 1 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced that the Government had agreed in principle to require a change of use to a casino to be subject to planning control. Therefore, the Government are minded to change the use classes order but this is subject to further detailed consideration of the outcome of the review and the usual consultation.

Council Housing (Right to Buy)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 216W, on council house sales, how much of the £3.0248 billion capital receipts generated from right-to-buy sales in 2003–04 was *(a)* set aside by local authorities and *(b)* centrally pooled for investment in new social housing. [209700]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold information on the value of the proportion of housing capital receipts set aside in 2003–04, and could provide it only at disproportionate cost. Under the set-aside regime, which was in force during the year in question, with-debt authorities were obliged to set aside 75 per cent. of the capital receipt arising from the disposal of a Housing Revenue Account dwelling through Right To Buy against debt. Debt-free authorities did not have to set aside any portion of the receipt. Central pooling of housing capital receipts was not introduced until 1 April 2004.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government has taken to alert council tenants to changes in the Right to Buy regulations. [211189]

Keith Hill: Since 1980, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its predecessors has published information for tenants on the terms of the Right to Buy scheme, in the form of a booklet. This booklet, entitled "Your right to buy your home", has been updated regularly to reflect changes to the scheme introduced by successive Governments. It was revised to include the reductions in maximum discounts introduced in March 2003 and reissued at that time, and has since been revised again to reflect the changes to the scheme introduced by the Housing Act 2004. A copy of that latest revision was sent to all local authorities and housing associations in England in advance of 18 January 2005, when most of these changes came into effect. The covering letter encouraged social landlords to distribute the booklet to their secure tenants. It also set out the changes to the Right to Buy rules, and stated that further copies of the new booklet are available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Free Literature supplier at Wetherby in Yorkshire.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of travel within the UK for the

Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206465]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created following the machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The information held centrally shows that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister central total spend on UK travel is as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	3.51
2003–04	3.88

Within this amount nothing was spent on helicopter costs and the following table shows what was spent for car hire charges:

Car hire	*£ million*
2002–03	0.394
2003–04	0.547

Details of hotel accommodation and subsistence costs could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All staff travel complied with the requirements of the Civil Service Management Code, and all ministerial travel is conducted in line with the requirements of the Ministerial Code.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Office's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210335]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the United Kingdom, including North Wales.

However, the services for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is directly responsible in England are mostly devolved, and therefore a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister for what reasons he is consulting on the future of the disabled facilities grant; and if he will make a statement. [210982]

Keith Hill: In response to a Parliamentary Question in the Other Place on 5 January 2004, *Official Report, House of Lords,* column 1, my right hon. Friend the Noble Lord Rooker announced a review of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme.

This review is now under way. Its terms of reference are to review the operation and outcomes of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme and to make proposals to improve its efficiency and fairness. This will include a review of the DFG means test.

The Review Group will report to Ministers in May 2005.

Domestic Fuel Tanks

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will require up-to-date information on the condition of fuel tanks to be included in the home condition inspection process. [211041]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's proposals for home information packs, will usually include a home condition report prepared by a qualified home inspector. We intend that home inspectors should be required to make a visual inspection of fuel tanks and to report on any damage that is observed.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning requirements he places upon householders for bunding for domestic oil tanks. [211043]

Phil Hope: There are no planning requirements for bunding of domestic oil tanks. However, since 1 April 2002 pollution risks from domestic oil tanks have been addressed in the Building Regulations.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203387]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister also provides a records management service to the Department for Transport. Actual numbers of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's files destroyed each year prior to 2004 could be provided only at disproportionate cost but an informed estimate for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Department for Transport combined is as follows.

2002—23,500; 2003—20,800; 2004 (to 6 December) 53,252. A further 23,400 files are awaiting destruction.

Files continue to be destroyed in accordance with well established procedures. Files which are not viewed as having permanent historical value are marked out for destruction after a specified period. At the end of this period files are destroyed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's contractors, once confirmation has been received that there is no business reason for, or historical value in, retaining them. In 2002 and 2003 a backlog of files awaiting destruction developed due to machinery of Government changes and the closure of the Hayes Records Repository. The higher figure for files destroyed in 2004 reflects work to clear that backlog, although this still stands at 23,400 files.

Fuel Prices

Roger Casale: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how he intends that the standard assessment procedure rating system shall adapt to changes in the relative prices of different fuels. [211422]

Phil Hope: The fuel prices used in the Standard Assessment Procedure are reviewed at intervals of between three and five years. When a review is made the price of each fuel is averaged over the preceding three-year period in order to smooth out short-term fluctuations. The intention is for Standard Assessment Procedure ratings to reflect trends in the relative prices of different fuels, rather than day-day variations, so as to provide a stable system.

Government Office for London

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the running costs of the Government Office for London have been in each year since 1999–2000; and what the forecast is for 2005. [210132]

Yvette Cooper: The running costs of the Government Office for London since 1999–2000 are as follows:

	£ million
1999–2000	[1]16.0
2000–01	[1]13.2
2001–02	[1]13.2
2002–03	[1]14.1
2003–04	[1]16.7
2004–05	[2]18.7
2005–06	[3]17.3

[1] These are unadjusted actual expenditure figures.

[2] Projected forecast for the year as at January 2005.

[3] Notified budget.

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff were employed by the Government Office for London in each year since 1999–2000; and how many are forecast to be employed at the end of 2004–05. [210133]

Yvette Cooper: The Government Office for London staffing figures[1] from 1999–2000 are in the table.

As at April:	*Number*
2001	240
2002	260
2003	288
2004	325
2005	[2]325

The Government Office for London carries out work on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

[1] GOL staffing figures are calculated as those staff (in staff units, not FTEs) working in GOL on GOL business; figures do not include those seconded into GOL who are paid for by their own employer.

[2] This is an estimate. GOL staffing may change in 2005, but it is difficult to predict accurately as decisions on future workstreams for Government Offices have yet to be made by central Departments.

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Government money was distributed by the Government Office for London in each year since 1999–2000; and what the forecast sum to be distributed in 2004–05 is. [210134]

Yvette Cooper: The Government Office for London (GOL) Programme Expenditure is tabled as follows[1]:

[1] GOL manages over 40 programmes on behalf of nine Whitehall Departments.

	£ million
1999–2000	2,202
2000–01	1,605
2001–02	2,094
2002–03	2,530
2003–04	2,724
2004–05	[1]3,283

[1] Current allocation.

High Hedges

Mr. Pope: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to bring forward regulations to bring into force sections of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 dealing with high hedges. [211542]

Mr. Maples: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to *(a)* publish and *(b)* implement regulations under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to allow authorities to deal with complaints about high hedges. [211527]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue guidance for local authorities at the same time as the regulations to bring part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 into force are laid before Parliament. We expect the complaints system to be fully operational early this year.

Housing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to build affordable homes for key workers in Coventry, South constituency. [211206]

Keith Hill: The Key Worker Living programme is focused on helping key workers in London, the East and the South East of England regions with funding coming from those regions allocations. In 2003, the West Midlands Regional Housing Board did not identify the provision of affordable homes for key workers as a sufficient priority to specifically allocate resources to key worker schemes in 2004–05 or 2005–06. It is however open to them to make recommendations for helping key workers in their region through the ADP in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

With regard to the new First Time Buyer Initiative announced by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister as part of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's five year plan, there are no sites currently identified to build homes under the scheme in Coventry. English Partnerships (EP) is leading on the delivery of 15,000 homes, which at the moment are focussed on the areas of greatest need, London and the South East, where its portfolio is concentrated. However we expect Regional Housing Boards to work closely with EP to identify future housing priorities and we encourage other landowners, such as local authorities, to use this model to address issues of housing affordability in their area.

Colin Burgon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made with each of the Pathfinder private finance initiative housing schemes. [211914]

Keith Hill: The London borough of Islington and Manchester city council signed contracts for Pathfinder Housing Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schemes in

March 2003. Reading borough council signed a contract for its housing PFI scheme in March 2004. Refurbishment work has started on all three schemes with work on the first homes being completed.

Leeds city council, the London borough of Newham, North East Derbyshire district council and Sandwell metropolitan borough council have appointed Preferred Bidders. These four and the London borough of Camden are in final negotiations with bidders and are expected to sign shortly.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average *(a)* house price and *(b)* first-time buyer property purchase price was in each local billing authority in England in each year for which figures are available. [211939]

Keith Hill: Estimates of average house prices at local authority level are only available back to 1996 and are based on Land Registry data. The figures for 1996 to 2003 are available from the Housing Statistics section on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's internet site.

The web link for the information is: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_housing/documents/page/odpm_house_609380.xls [Housing-Housing Statistics-Live Tables-Housing Market-Table no 582].

Comparable data for first-time buyers is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has conducted a study into the impact of the introduction of identity cards on his Department's business. [209622]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been working closely with the Home Office to identify where the ID cards scheme will provide benefits to our business areas. This work is ongoing.

Living Spaces Programme (West Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which projects in the West Derbyshire constituency have *(a)* applied for funds, *(b)* been supported with funds and *(c)* been refused funds from the Living Spaces programme; and how many applications are pending that were submitted before the 21 July 2004 deadline. [211937]

Phil Hope: Four projects in the West Derbyshire constituency have applied for funding from the Living Spaces programme. Three projects have been approved and awarded funding. They are:

Playground Development project in Sheldon, Bakewell which has been awarded a grant of £8,000.

Pilsey Jubilee Gardens project which has been awarded a grant of £9,168.55

The Matlock Rampage project which has been awarded a grant of £20,000.

The fourth group has had its initial application approved and has since worked up its plans with the help of a trained Living Spaces enabler. Once Living Spaces receives a final recommendation from the enabler a decision on funding will be taken. This project is:

Cromford Playground Improvements project which has applied for a grant of £16,118.00.

To date, no applications from groups in the West Derbyshire constituency have been refused funds from the Living Spaces programme.

Local Authority Plans

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what local authority plans each tier of local authority in England is required to produce in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and which plans are not compulsory for good or excellent authorities. [207927]

Phil Hope: The table explains the plans required from the various tiers of English local authority in 2004–05 and 2005–06. Some plans are required upon cycles agreed with Government Offices or outlined in legislation, so will not be required each year. Some plans are required only in certain areas, depending on local circumstances or service specific performance. By the beginning of 2006–07 there will have been a 75 per cent. reduction in the number of separate plans required from local authorities compared to when research identified 66 plans in 2001.

Plan	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Air Quality Action Plan (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs (Depending on local air quality standards)	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs (Depending on local air quality standards)
Behaviour Support Plan (Department for Education and Skills)	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitan, London Boroughs	Not required—Duty repealed through Children Act 2004
Best Value Performance Plan (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)	BV Parishes, Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	BV Parishes, Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs
Civil Contingencies Plans (Cabinet Office)	Not required this year—awaiting commencement of Civil Contingencies Act 2004. Existing Civil Defence Plans maintained by Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs
Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (Home Office)	Not required this year (three-yearly cycle)	Districts and Counties (published at District level), Unitaries, London Boroughs
Home Energy Conservation Report (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitan, London Boroughs	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitan, London Boroughs
Housing Strategy (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitan, London Boroughs (depending on cycle agreed with Government Offices)	Districts, Unitaries, Metropolitan, London Boroughs (depending on cycle agreed with Government Offices)
Joint Municipal Waste Strategy (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)	Not required this year—Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 requires plans in April 2005.	Counties and Districts (where not exempt under criteria set out in regulations)

Plan	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Library Position Statement (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) (where performance was not excellent)	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Requirement ceased
Local Development Scheme (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister)	Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs
Local Transport Plan and Bus Strategy (Department for Transport)	Not required this year (5-yearly cycle)	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitan Districts (in Passenger Transport Authority areas)
Teenage Pregnancy Strategy (Department for Education and Skills)	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs
Trading Standards Plan (Executive Summary)(Department of Trade and Industry)	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Requirement ceased
Youth Justice Plan (Youth Justice Board)	Not required this year by Youth Justice Board	Districts, Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs
Youth Service Plan	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs	Counties, Unitaries, Metropolitans, London Boroughs

Good authorities will still be required to produce these plans as appropriate. Subject to the successful completion of the parliamentary procedure for the Local Authorities Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) 2005 Order, excellent authorities will only be required to produce streamlined Best Value Performance Plans (in both years), Civil Contingencies Plans (in 2005–06), Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategies (in 2005–06), Youth Service Plans (2004–05) and Local Development Schemes (in 2004–05). All local planning authorities (districts and unitaries) either have to complete old development plans or prepare new development plan documents over the next three years (districts and counties, and for waste and minerals only, counties). The aforementioned Order will remove the requirement for excellent authorities to publish, produce or prepare (as the case may be) Homelessness Strategies, Home Energy Conservation Reports, Youth Justice Plans, Rights of Way Improvement Plans, Local Transport Plans and Bus Strategies and Air Quality Action Plans.

Local Government Finance

Harry Cohen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which grants, including special grants, the London boroughs of *(a)* Redbridge and *(b)* Waltham Forest will receive a funding allocation for 2005–06; what the allocation will be in each case; and if he will make a statement. [211256]

Mr. Raynsford: The following table lists formula grant, plus specific revenue grants allocated thus far, to the London boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest in 2005–06. The grants listed are all within Aggregate External Finance (AEF).

AEF is the total level of support the Government provide to local authorities. This support is normally made up of Revenue Support Grant, police grant, specific grants and the amount distributed from business rates. AEF does not include finance for capital, housing and for other programmes such as the Learning and Skills Council grant for sixth forms.

£ million

	London borough of Redbridge	*London borough of Waltham Forest*
Formula grant		
Revenue Support Grant	134.628	165.519
National Non-Domestic Rates	81.686	73.839
Specific grants		
Standards Fund	7.706	8.467
Leadership Incentive	0.189	2.295
Excellence in Cities	0.000	3.971
Teachers Pay Reform	4.184	3.633
Transitional Support	0.813	1.292
General Sure Start Grant	1.383	1.471
Adoption Support	0.181	0.270
Safeguarding Children	0.497	0.748
Choice Protects	0.305	0.461
Teenage Pregnancy	0.108	0.131
Change Fund	0.052	0.050
Access and Systems Capacity	2.761	2.582
Children and Adolescent Mental Health	0.467	0.704
Carers Grant	0.918	1.024
Delayed Discharge	0.473	0.442
Human Resources Development Strategy	0.302	0.355
Mental Health Grant	0.637	0.793
National Training Strategy	0.443	0.523
Preserved Rights	1.269	1.214
Residential Allowance	0.991	0.656
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	0.000	2.553
Supporting People	4.259	7.666
Supporting People Administration	0.152	0.265
Homelessness Strategies	0.100	0.200
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Admin.	1.493	1.996
Waste Performance and Efficiency	0.197	0.177
Waste Minimisation and Recycling	0.112	0.100

The 2005–06 settlement represents a continued increase in investment in local government, which will allow local authorities to continue to deliver improving services at an affordable cost.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the Ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209223]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Parish Councils

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list each parish council in England. [211161]

Mr. Raynsford: Volume two of the latest edition of the "Municipal Year Book" lists parishes under the relevant county and district council area.

Departmental Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many car parking spaces are provided for those *(a)* working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208930]

Yvette Cooper: The number of car parking spaces provided for those working in and visiting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's HQ buildings in central London is:

	Staff car parking spaces	*Car parking spaces allocated to visitors*
Ashdown House	[1]10	2
Eland House	[2]20	2
26 Whitehall	0	0
Portland House	0	0

[1] Ten of these spaces are allocated to disabled staff or staff needing them for medical reasons.

[2] Eight of these spaces are allocated to disabled staff or staff needing them for medical reasons.

The number of car parking spaces provided for those working in and visiting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's HQ buildings outside central London is:

	Staff car parking spaces	*Car parking spaces allocated to visitors*
Hempstead House, Hemel Hempstead	31	0
Fire Experimental Unit, Moreton-in-Marsh	12	10
Fire Service Improvement Team, Marchington	59	0

The Government Offices provide 535 spaces for their staff with three spaces specifically for visitors. Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has overall responsibility for the buildings occupied by Government Offices, they carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Regional Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated central Government grant to each regional chamber is for 2005–06. [211160]

Mr. Raynsford: Regional Assembly grant allocations for 2005–06 have yet to be finalised. Subject to receipt of a satisfactory business plan the maximum allocations available for each assembly from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is tabled as follows.

Regional Assembly	*Provisional allocations 2005–06*
East	2,112,000
East Midlands	2,056,000
North East	1,708,000
North West	2,536,000
South East	3,280,000
South West	2,101,000
West Midlands	2,071,000
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,923,000
English Regions Network	200,000
Total	17,987,000

Rent to Mortgage Schemes

Mr. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people qualified for the Rent to Mortgage scheme in the seven years prior to its abolition; and what the average cost of the scheme was per year in that period. [211188]

Keith Hill: Secure tenants of local authorities or of registered social landlords who qualify for the Right to Buy scheme also qualify for the Rent to Mortgage scheme. This includes tenants who have spent at least two years as public sector tenants (five years for tenancies commencing on or after 18 January 2005). It does not include assured tenants of registered social landlords who retain the preserved Right to Buy after stock transfer. There are 2.5 million eligible tenants.

Rent to Mortgage sales, receipts and discounts since 1997 are as follows.

		2003–04 prices	
	Sales	*Receipts*	*Discount*
1997–98	7	323,000	289,000
1998–99	12	422,000	380,000
1999–2000	23	1,362,000	970,000
2000–01	40	2,080,000	1,105,000
2001–02	87	5,023,000	2,167,000
2002–03	162	11,708,000	3,788,000
2003–04	259	17,600,000	5,159,000
Totals 1997–2004	590	38,529,000	13,858,000

Information on the administrative cost of the Rent to Mortgage scheme is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Secondments

Alan Simpson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208629]

Yvette Cooper: The table shows all the inward secondments from the private sector as at 19 January 2005 showing their "parent" organisation and also the policy area that they are currently working in.

Name	*Organisation/Industry*	*Policy responsibility*
Derek Collins	Accord Plc/Support Service	Local government
Melanie Davies	Forways Engineering Ltd./ Engineering Sector	Fire and rescue service
Henry Hislop	Busha Global Ltd./	Neighbourhood renewal
Linda Smith	Capacity/Charity?	Neighbourhood renewal

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the special advisers who accompanied him on each of his visits abroad between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [210570]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1050W, by the Under-Secretary of State, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Phil Hope).

Traveller Sites

Mr. Key: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much Wiltshire county council has applied for in grant aid in respect of traveller sites in the Salisbury area; and when a decision will be made on the application. [211243]

Yvette Cooper: The current bidding round of the Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant closes on 28 February 2005. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not yet received an application for funding from Wiltshire county council. We will expect to announce successful bids in April 2005.

Wiltshire county council has been awarded £655,736 of funding in previous rounds of the Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what helpline services the Government provide to travellers; and how much was spent on such services in the last period for which figures are available. [211924]

Yvette Cooper: The Government do not provide any helplines specific to gypsies and travellers.

Trees

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many trees have been planted in London since 1975; [211487]

(2) how many trees there were in Greater London in *(a)* 1975, *(b)* 1980, *(c)* 1990, *(d)* 2000 and *(e)* the latest year for which figures are available. [211488]

Phil Hope: Accurate data is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All local authorities maintain their own records of privately owned trees that are protected by tree preservation orders and many have inventories of trees for which they are responsible. The last survey of trees in London (Action for London's Trees, 1993) estimated that there were nearly 6,000,000 individual trees and hedges and more than 65,000 woodlands and stands of trees. A survey is currently being carried out to assess the composition of trees in towns and cities in England, including London. The results will be available in summer 2005.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoptions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adoption cases have been completed in each local authority in each of the last five years. [210362]

Margaret Hodge: The information has been placed in the Libraries.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* young apprenticeships and *(b)* apprenticeships for adults aged 25 years and over are available, broken down by (i) geographic areas and (ii) sectors; and what plans she has to extend them to (A) Stafford and (B) other parts of England. [211223]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether *(a)* head teachers and *(b)* other staff will be able to participate in the design of schools being rebuilt as part of Building Schools for the Future; [211347]

(2) what support is available to head teachers and other staff participating in the design of schools being rebuilt as part of the Building Schools for the Future scheme. [211528]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 27 January 2005:]* It is essential to the success of any school building project, including Building Schools for the Future, that those who will use the buildings are involved in the design and building from start to finish. This includes head teachers, other staff, pupils and the local community. The process of design and building is also an excellent educational opportunity for pupils.

To this end, the Department develops and spreads good practice through projects with expert bodies such as CABE, School Works, Learning through Landscapes and "joinedupdesignforschools", guidance such as the exemplar designs, and materials such as the School Works Toolkit and post-occupancy evaluations. For Building Schools for the Future, our delivery body Partnerships for Schools is charged with supporting local government so that all projects are models of good practice.

Child Care

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what services the funds for the supply side of child care services as set out in the Government's 10-year child care strategy will be spent; and how much will be spent on each. [209775]

Margaret Hodge: The baseline for the Sure Start Unit is £866 million in 2004–05, £1,144 million in 2005–06, £1,671 million in 2006–07 and £1,884 million in 2007–08.

For 2004–06 almost £900 million supply side funding within the General Sure Start Grant has been allocated to local authorities to create, sustain and support child care services. In addition to this, £1,025 million has been allocated to Sure Start Local Programmes and over £34 million to Early Excellence Centres, with all funding supporting the 10-year child care strategy. The details of precise allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are still being finalised.

In addition, from April 2003 all financial support for the delivery of free nursery education was consolidated with the under fives sub-block of each local authority's Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS)—the main source of education funding. Support for free nursery education in 2003–04 was £2.6 billion.

Child Protection

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how she plans to ensure that the information-sharing database in children's services flags cases of domestic violence or child abuse to ensure that domestic violence perpetrators cannot use their rights under the Data Protection Act 1998 to track down their children or ex-partner. [212089]

Margaret Hodge: We recognise the importance of ensuring that children and families are protected from the perpetrators of domestic violence or child abuse. The details of how the information sharing databases or indexes will work will be set out in regulations and guidance. In framing the regulations and guidance we will take care to address the issue of protection from the perpetrators of domestic violence or abuse. This will include the facility for certain details, such as an address, to be blocked out or not to appear on the index at all where a parent has good cause to believe that the inclusion of such information may lead to a crime being committed.

Where information on a child is held on the index, and a parent makes a request to access that information, their rights to access that information are balanced by the rights of the child. For children of sufficient maturity (which for the vast majority of children is taken to mean aged 12 or over), the right under the Data Protection Act to access data held about the child on the index will belong to the child rather than to the parent. So there will be no obligation on the person with responsibility for managing and operating the index (the data controller) to disclose information to a parent in such cases.

For other children, where rights to access information held on a child may be exercised by a parent with parental responsibility, the data controller is under no obligation to disclose information if that would lead to harm. We will ensure that guidance to data controllers on handling such requests includes guidance on identifying cases of potential harm and procedures to avoid this, such as asking the other parent if they have any objection to the request or deciding that the other parent is the best person to exercise access right on behalf of the child.

Children's Centres

Ms Atherton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recommendations she has made to local authorities regarding parental involvement in children's centres. [210128]

Margaret Hodge: One of the Sure Start principles is that parents and children have access to services that are tailored flexibly according to their needs and circumstances. We issued children's centre start up guidance to local authorities in February 2003. This said that children's centres must not only consult parents and carers, including fathers, on what services to offer, but must also actively involve them by setting up systems to get their feedback on services and having on-going arrangements to ensure parents have a voice. There must also be mechanisms in place to enable parents to self-refer to services. Children's centres should implement specific strategies to include fathers. Family support and health advice must be available at times suitable for working parents. There should also be opportunities for family learning to take place at the centre or in settings linked to the centre such as FE colleges.

Class Sizes

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* five, *(b)* six and *(c)* seven-year-old children in Nottingham, North were taught in class sizes of 30 or more in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest period for which figures are available. [211019]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The age of individual pupils in classes is not collected centrally. The available information is shown in the table.

Maintained primary schools[1]: Number of pupils in Key Stage 1 classes of 31 or more pupils taught by one teacher—1997 and 2004—position in January each year—Nottingham, North parliamentary constituency

	1997	2004
Total pupils in all classes	3,471	2,892
Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more		
Number of pupils	415	31
Percentage of pupils[2]	12.0	1.1

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Percentage of pupils in those classes expressed as a percentage of pupils in all classes taught by one teacher.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

College Lecturers (Pay)

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many college lecturers are employed by outside organisations; what the average differential in the pay rates between college lecturers employed directly by colleges and those employed indirectly is; and whether her Department monitors the pay rates set by *(a)* Protocol Professional and *(b)* other consultancies who hire lecturers using public funds. [211366]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Data from the Learning and Schools Council (LSC) indicate that some 11,900 (9 per cent.) of teaching staff in colleges in the academic year 2002–03 were not employed directly by colleges.

The rates of pay set by Protocol Professionals or any other agencies are not monitored by the LSC or the Department.

Further education colleges are run by independent corporations established under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. They determine their own recruitment and pay policies. Pay levels will therefore vary from institution to institution.

The following table shows the average salaries of full-time lecturers in further education paying into the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS) as at 31 March 2002.

£

	Men	Women	All
Under 25	18,510	18,180	18,290
25–29	21,050	20,780	20,890
30–34	23,730	23,350	23,530
35–39	25,820	25,160	25,510
40–44	27,480	26,560	27,040
45–49	28,900	27,850	28,400
50–54	30,400	28,620	29,640
55–59	30,560	29,690	30,210
60 and over	30,370	28,290	29,780
All ages	28,410	26,880	27,710

Source:

Database of Teacher Records

There is no barrier to agency staff joining the TPS but the differing rates of pay between agency and non-agency staff cannot be determined. There are no indications on the proportion of staff joining the TPS.

Departmental Policies (Hull)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull, North of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211808]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Kingston upon Hull, North constituency lies within Kingston upon Hull local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents Achievement for pupils attending schools in Kingston upon Hull, North are given in the following tables.

Key Stage 2 Achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency

Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above

	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Kingston upon Hull, North—English	49.9	71.2	21.3
Kingston upon Hull, North—Maths	48.7	72.6	23.9
National Average—English	63	78	15
National Average—Maths	61	74	13

GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Kingston upon Hull, North—5 + A*-C	26.0	41.5	15.5
Kingston upon Hull, North—5 + A*-G	75.9	81.0	5.1
Kingston upon Hull, North—1 + A*-G	82.1	90.0	7.9
National Average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National Average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National Average—1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are Parliamentary constituency, Ward, Local Authority District, Local Education Authority, Government Office Region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE / GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post 16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In Your Area' website will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about Adult Education, School Funding, School Initiatives, School Performance, School Workforce and Post 16.

Education Funding

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much central Government funding was received by each local education authority in England *(a)* per primary pupil and *(b)* per secondary pupil in 2004–05; if she will estimate the figures for 2005–06 based on the provisional local government settlement; and if she will provide in each case estimates for England as whole. [212020]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The table gives, for local education authorities in England in 2004–05, the total funding per pupil in cash terms. These funding figures include funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and grants allocated at an LEA level, it also includes the pensions transfer to EPS and the Learning and Skills Council.

Unfortunately, estimated funding figures for 2005–06 are not available as not all grant figures for 2005–06 are yet to hand.

England LEAs—funding per pupil in cash terms

£

LEA name	*Primary (3 to 10-year-olds)*	*Secondary (11 to 15-year-olds)*
England total	3,560	4,450
Camden	5,390	6,610
Greenwich	4,800	6,060
Hackney	5,460	7,300
Hammersmith and Fulham	5,230	6,630
Islington	5,300	6,850
Kensington and Chelsea	5,440	7,010
Lambeth	5,360	7,270
Lewisham	4,910	6,470
Southwark	5,000	6,910
Tower Hamlets	5,630	6,940
Wandsworth	4,630	6,030
Westminster	5,120	6,240
Barking and Dagenham	4,060	5,080
Barnet	3,880	4,770
Bexley	3,520	4,430
Brent	4,460	5,720
Bromley	3,510	4,490
Croydon	3,820	5,000
Ealing	4,270	5,450
Enfield	4,020	4,980
Haringey	4,670	6,200
Harrow	3,890	4,830
Havering	3,480	4,480
Hillingdon	3,770	4,700
Hounslow	4,180	5,140
Kingston upon Thames	3,550	4,490
Merton	3,880	4,890
Newham	4,620	5,670
Redbridge	3,750	4,580
Richmond upon Thames	3,520	4,550
Sutton	3,610	4,510
Waltham Forest	4,300	5,500
Birmingham	3,840	4,900
Coventry	3,570	4,460
Dudley	3,230	4,100
Sandwell	3,650	4,570
Solihull	3,220	4,060
Walsall	3,430	4,270
Wolverhampton	3,660	4,710
Knowsley	3,950	5,110
Liverpool	3,880	4,970
St. Helens	3,510	4,500
Sefton	3,400	4,370
Wirral	3,500	4,480
Bolton	3,430	4,210
Bury	3,340	4,180
Manchester	4,110	5,310
Oldham	3,640	4,510
Rochdale	3,670	4,660
Salford	3,690	4,720
Stockport	3,200	4,040
Tameside	3,420	4,310
Trafford	3,230	4,090
Wigan	3,320	4,170
Barnsley	3,480	4,440

England LEAs—funding per pupil in cash terms

£

LEA name	*Primary (3 to 10-year-olds)*	*Secondary (11 to 15-year-olds)*
Doncaster	3,540	4,440
Rotherham	3,490	4,390
Sheffield	3,520	4,500
Bradford	3,700	4.680
Calderdale	3,430	4,300
Kirklees	3,530	4,430
Leeds	3,440	4,420
Wakefield	3,310	4,130
Gateshead	3,550	4,550
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,730	4,720
North Tyneside	3,380	4,390
South Tyneside	3,690	4,590
Sunderland	3,550	4,460
Bath and North East Somerset	3,160	3,960
City of Bristol	3,550	4,740
North Somerset	3,220	4,090
South Gloucestershire	3,100	3,980
Hartlepool	3,600	4,570
Middlesbrough	3,880	5,340
Redcar and Cleveland	3,580	4,490
Stockton-on-Tees	3,530	4,500
City of Kingston-upon-Hull	3,680	4,650
East Riding of Yorkshire	3,240	3,980
North East Lincolnshire	3,460	4,370
North Lincolnshire	3,410	4,250
North Yorkshire	3,340	4,020
York	3,130	4,000
Bedfordshire	3,370	4,270
Luton	3,820	4,850
Buckinghamshire	3,430	4,310
Milton Keynes	3,570	4,490
Derbyshire	3,250	4,020
Derby	3,500	4,440
Dorset	3,210	4,020
Poole	3,040	4,050
Bournemouth	3,230	4,070
Durham	3,430	4,310
Darlington	3,410	4,280
East Sussex	3,490	4,400
Brighton and Hove	3,610	4,570
Hampshire	3,300	4,150
Portsmouth	3,570	4,600
Southampton	3,640	4,590
Leicestershire	3,100	3,860
Leicester	3,860	4,670
Rutland	3.310	4,060
Staffordshire	3,130	3,940
Stoke on Trent	3,590	4,610
Wiltshire	3,320	4,050
Swindon	3,280	4,120
Bracknell Forest	3.400	4,490
Windsor and Maidenhead	3,470	4,400
West Berkshire	3,420	4,240
Reading	3,760	4,960
Slough	4,150	5,290
Wokingham	3,280	4,150
Cambridgeshire	3,350	4,130
Peterborough	3,640	4,560
Cheshire	3,200	4,000
Halton	3,740	4,750
Warrington	3,110	3,950
Devon	3,330	4,060
Plymouth	3,300	4,180
Torbay	3,270	4,150
Essex	3,460	4,360
Southend	3,520	4,480
Thurrock	3,700	4,820
Herefordshire	3,490	4,230
Worcestershire	3,140	3,990
Kent	3,470	4,400
Medway	3,360	4,270
Lancashire	3,360	4,190
Blackburn	3,860	4,780
Blackpool	3,480	4,480
Nottinghamshire	3,210	4,010
Nottingham City	3,880	5,090
Shropshire	3,360	4,140
The Wrekin	3,420	4,300
Cornwall	3,380	4,110
Cumbria	3,410	4,180
Gloucestershire	3,230	4,040
Hertfordshire	3,400	4,290
Isle of Wight Council	3,540	4,470
Lincolnshire	3,350	4,200
Norfolk	3,420	4,200
Northamptonshire	3,290	4,130
Northumberland	3,350	4,230
Oxfordshire	3,450	4,300
Somerset	3,300	4,150
Suffolk	3,230	4,070
Surrey	3,370	4,250
Warwickshire	3,270	4,090
West Sussex	3,360	4,190

Notes:

1. Price base: Cash.

2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education EPS settlements and include the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC. EPS is paid to authorities as a combination of central Government grant and council tax raised locally.

3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and excludes EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level. For those LEAs in receipt of advance of grant under the transitional support arrangements for 2004–05, advance grant funding is included in the year of payment (2004–05). There will be a consequential reduction in DfES grant for these LEAs in future years (either 2006–07 and 2007–08 or 2006–07 to 2008–09) depending on the terms which the advance was given to the LEA.

4. The pupil numbers used to convert £m figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the EPS settlement calculations.

5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

6. Status: 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* percentage and *(b)* cash change in education funding for Leicestershire County Council has been in each year since 2001–02; how many teachers have been employed in Leicestershire local education authority area in each year since 2001–02 in real terms; and how much funding has changed per (i) primary and (ii) secondary school pupil in Leicestershire since 2001–02. [212122]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is in the tables. Total funding includes funding via Education Formula Spending/Standard Spending Assessment and grants allocated at the LEA level. It excludes the pensions transfer to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council, and is in real terms.

Real total funding, pupils aged 3 to 19 in Leicestershire

	Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EFS and LSC in 2003–04 and 2004–05 (£ million)	*Cash change (£ million)*	*Percentage change*
2001–02	306.4	—	—
2002–03	319.5	13.1	4
2003–04	331.7	12.2	4
2004–05	344.5	12.8	4

Average funding per pupil (£), Leicestershire: Real terms, excluding pensions transfer to EFS and LSC in 2003–04 and 2004–05

£

	Primary (3 to 10 year olds)	Secondary (11 to 15 year olds)
2001–02	2,720	3,460
2002–03	2,740	3,520
2003–04	2,860	3,520
2004–05	2,960	3,690

Notes:

1. Price Base: Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EFS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–15 and exclude EMAs and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £m figures to £ per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3 year old maintained pupils and estimated 3 to 4-year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. Where responsibility for funding a school has transferred from an LEA, related funding no longer appears in the series.
6. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10.
7. Status: 2003–04 and 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

The following table gives the number of teachers employed in Leicestershire since 2001–02:

	Number of teachers
2001–02	5,040
2002–03	5,290
2003–04	5,220

Notes:

Figures are full-time equivalent regular teachers (excluding occasional) in service in the maintained sector in January of each year.

The figure quoted for 2002–03 may be overstated.

Source:

DfES Annual Survey of Teachers in Service and Teacher Vacancies (Form 618G).

Information for all LEAs is published by the Department in the Statistical First Release on the DfES website at the following URL:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000493/index.shtml.

Education Provision (Northamptonshire)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many teachers were employed in schools in Northamptonshire in the academic years *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2003–04; [211280]

(2) how many teachers were employed in schools in Northampton in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* 2003–04; [211281]

(3) how many learning support assistants were employed in schools in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* Northampton in (i) 1997–98 and (ii) 2003–04. [211282]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the full-time equivalent number of teachers in the Northampton, North and Northampton, South constituencies and Northamptonshire LEA in 1998 and 2004:

Maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units[1,2]
Full-time equivalent number of teachers[3]

	1998			2004		
Position in January each year: 1998 and 2004	Qualified teachers	Other teaching staff	Total teaching staff	Qualified teachers	Other teaching staff	Total teaching staff
Northampton, North parliamentary constituency	930	10	940	940	50	990
Northampton, South parliamentary constituency	740	10	750	830	40	870
Northampton total	1,670	20	1,690	1,770	90	1,860
Northamptonshire LEA[4]	—	—	5,290	5,600	160	5,760

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

[4] *Source:*

DfES 618G Survey

The following table shows the full-time equivalent number of support staff in the Northampton, North and Northampton, South constituencies and Northampton LEA in 1998 and 2004:

Maintained nursery, primary, secondary, special schools and pupil referral units[1,2] full-time equivalent number of support staff[3]
Position in January each year: 1998 and 2004

	1998			2004		
	Teaching assistants	All other support staff	Total support staff	Teaching assistants	All other support staff	Total support staff
Northampton, North parliamentary constituency	220	200	420	300	380	680
Northampton, South parliamentary constituency	120	170	280	210	320	540
Northampton total	340	370	700	510	700	1,220
Northamptonshire LEA	880	1,090	1,980	1,360	2,080	3,440

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census

Extended School Programmes

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list known sources of funding for extended school programmes; and if she will make a statement. [208783]

Margaret Hodge: The Government are committed to supporting the development of extended schools, to offer enrichment activities and child care to parents and children. By 2010 all parents with children aged 5–11 will be offered the guarantee of affordable child care between the hours of 8 am to 6 pm, all year round. Provision could be available in a local school, in a neighbouring school or on a different site, provided by the school or in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers, including local childminders. Half of all parents will be able to enjoy this service by 2008. For secondary school aged children, all secondary schools will, by 2010, be open 8 am to 6 pm all year round offering a range of interesting activities. By 2008 we want at least a third of all secondary schools making this offer.

We have already committed around £50 million over the period 2003–04 to 2004–05 to support the roll out of extended schools. This has comprised just under £44 million paid via the Standards Fund (including £2.8 million made available by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and £1.8 million from the Home Office) and £6.8 million paid through the Sure Start General Grant. In addition to this £14 million from the Young People's Fund element of the Big Lottery Fund has been made available to 78 local authorities over three years from 2004–05 to support the development of extended schools across their areas

Funding should also be available from the agencies which deliver services provided on school premises such as health and social care. Schools can also charge for some services such as community use of the schools premises and child care. In the case of school based child care, parents, who are eligible, can claim part of the cost through the child care element of the working tax credit.

In the financial year 2005–06 my Department will be making available just over £107 million to support the development of extended schools. In later years we will provide further sums including funding to support the development of school based child care. An announcement will be made in due course. The funding for extended schools is to kick start the delivery of services with the intention that the facilities should be self-sustaining over time.

Foster Carers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the availability of foster carers. [210205]

Margaret Hodge: At 31 March 2004 approximately 61,100 children were looked after, of whom 68 per cent. were in foster placements in England. The Department itself does not collect information centrally about the number of foster carers. However, a recent survey of local authorities, carried out by the Fostering Network, indicated a shortage of around 8,200 foster carers in England.

Supporting local authorities to act effectively to recruit and retain foster carers is therefore a priority for my Department and we have recently produced a Fostering Publicity Pack designed to help local authorities to run targeted local campaigns to recruit new foster carers for looked after children. We have also awarded a 3 year grant of £180,000 to the Fostering Network to support Foster Care Fortnight, which has a particular focus on recruitment.

In addition, the Choice Protects grant, which provides funding of £113 million over three years, has a specific emphasis on fostering services. We are currently developing a number of new initiatives to improve the status, support and training of foster carers. These include the development of a national award ceremony, a national advice line, measures to improve the support given to foster carers who are subject to allegations and new training resources for foster carers. We will also shortly be commencing detailed work on payments to foster carers in the context of the Children Act 2004.

GCSEs

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average GCSE point scores were for each category of school in England in 2003/04. [211638]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the average GCSE and equivalents point score by school type by the end of 2003/04.

School type (admissions basis)	*Average GCSE and equivalents point score*
Comprehensive schools[1]	337.5
Selective schools	499.2
Modern schools	308.3
Other maintained schools[2]	44.3
All maintained schools	335.1
Independent schools[3]	406.2
All schools	340.3

[1] Including City Technology Colleges and Academies.

[2] Including community and foundation special schools, hospital schools and pupil referral units.

[3] Including non-maintained special schools.

Looked-after Children

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many looked-after children have been placed in private boarding schools in each of the last four years for which figures are available, broken down by local authority. [211955]

Mr. Twigg: This information has not been collected in 2004 and earlier years. It will be collected for the first time through the 2005 annual schools census.

Natural Auralism

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of natural auralism on teaching children with hearing impairment. [207540]

Margaret Hodge: In 2003 the DfES commissioned Cambridge and Manchester Universities to carry out a joint study of teaching approaches for different types of special educational needs (SEN). The study found that there was a large degree of overlap between different effective approaches—in essence, good teaching skills are much the same for all pupils, regardless of whether or not they have SEN, or the type of SEN.

The 2003 research did not include an assessment of the effectiveness of the different specialised approaches used in teaching children with hearing impairment—oral/aural, total communication and sign bilingualism. We are considering what further work might be taken forward in this area.

Parents of deaf or hearing impaired pupils who have statements of special educational needs, are able to express a preference for the maintained school they would like their child to attend, and can also make representations for a place at an independent or non-maintained special school. Before expressing a preference they are able to consider teaching approaches offered by different schools. Local authorities decide which school should be named in a child's statement taking account of parental preference and the individual needs of the child.

New Deal

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Stoke-on-Trent have received money under the New Deal for Schools. [211715]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The schools that were allocated money under New Deal for Schools during the period 1997 to 2002 were: Sandon High School, The Mitchell High School, Sneyd Green Primary School, St. Margaret Ward RC High School, Florence Primary School, and Dresden Primary School. This information was recorded centrally and local authorities' allocation of resources may differ from this.

Ofsted

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure of Ofsted was in each year since its establishment; and what the estimated budget for the next financial year is. [211941]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: That is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the House Library.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Ofsted inspectors were employed in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04; how many are planned to be employed in each year between 2004–05 and 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [211526]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: That is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

Physical Education

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of primary schools in the UK have a fully qualified physical education teacher. [211835]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In England, primary school teachers are trained to deliver all subjects in the national curriculum including PE. In the other UK countries this is a matter for the devolved administrations.

In January 2004, there were 196,640 full-time equivalent regular teachers in service in maintained nursery and primary schools in England.

Pre-school Education

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pre-school aged children there are in the Islington, North constituency; how many have places in nurseries or other approved pre-school provision; and how many such places *(a)* are available at present and *(b)* are planned. [210712]

Margaret Hodge: The Ofsted stock number of registered child care places (consisting of full day care, childminder and out of school places) available in Islington at March 2004 was 4,567 and increased to 4,878 in December 2004. We are unable to provide statistics for Islington North constituency from Ofsted statistics.

In the period March 2004 to December 2004 Islington local authority (LA) created 733 gross new places. Taking into account turnover (places closing) this added 311 new places to the existing stock. The December registered stock data consists of 987 childminder places, 2,754 full day care places and 1,227 out of school places.

Islington has a target to create 1,300 gross new child care places for the period 2004–06. This includes the 733 places created since March 2004, leaving a further 567 places to be created by March 2006. These places will be created by Islington LA, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership to meet parental demand.

In addition, all four-year-olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since September 1998. All three year olds in England have been entitled to a free part-time early education place since April 2004.

The available information on the numbers of free part-time early education places taken up by three and four-year-olds in Islington North parliamentary constituency and Islington local education authority area is shown in the tables. Information for private and voluntary providers is available for Islington but not for Islington North constituency.

Final figures for 2004 on the provision for three and four-year-olds were published in a statistical release 'Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2004' which is available on the Department's website www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway.

Private Children's Homes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she has taken to improve the line of accountability for social services Departments who place looked-after children in private children's homes out of area. [210206]

Margaret Hodge: Children's services authorities are in the process of appointing the Directors of Children's Services and Lead Members for Children's Services required under the Children Act 2004. The Director and Lead Member will improve children's services authority accountability for the placement of all looked after children by, respectively, being professionally and politically responsible on behalf of the authority for the safety and welfare of such children.

Although all members of the authority have a shared responsibility for corporate parenting, the Lead Member will take the lead in ensuring that looked after children have their interests protected, their opportunities maximised, their educational achievement enhanced and their care shaped to met their needs. The 2004 Act also introduces a new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.

The Department is currently conducting a review of local authority practice in placing looked after children in other local authority areas, with a view to both reducing their dependence on such placements and improving support for children who are placed out of authority. We intend to write to local authorities shortly reminding them of the importance of placing children locally whenever this can meet their needs and better planning and commissioning in adequate supply of such places.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many private children's homes have been registered in each of the last five years. [210207]

Margaret Hodge: Information provided by the Commission for Social Care Inspection on the number of private children's homes registered from 1 April 2002 to 19 January 2005 is shown in the table.

Information is not available prior to 1 April 2002, when the National Care Standards Commission was created.

	Private children's homes
2002–03	103
2003–04	148
2004–05 (1 April to 18 January 2005 only)	118

Relationship Counselling

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what discussions she has had regarding the impact upon charities specialising in *(a)* marriage counselling and *(b)* family relationship counselling of the decision to end ring-fencing of Government funds for these services; [209702]

(2) what representations she has received from charities working with young people and families regarding the decision to end ring-fencing of Government funds for relationship counselling; [209712]

(3) what progress has been made in improving *(a)* marriage counselling and *(b)* relationship counselling services in (i) North West Leicestershire, (ii) the East Midlands and (iii) England since 1997. [209713]

Margaret Hodge: There has been no decision to end ring-fencing Government funds for marriage counselling and family relationship counselling. Funding for charities specialising in these services was formerly available through the Marriage and Relationship Support (MARS) grant. The Marriage and Relationship Support grant has now been amalgamated with the former Family Support grant to form the Strengthening Families grant, but the same amount of money is available to support the provision of marriage counselling and family relationship counselling. Marriage and Relationship Support will continue as an integral and important element of family support provision by the Department.

In view of the recent merger of the Marriage and Relationship Support and the Family Support grant programmes we are considering evaluation of the current Marriage and Relationship and Family Support provision.

We have had no representations from the sector in this area.

School Toilets

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in England have outside toilets. [211142]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department does not hold information regarding schools which have outside toilets.

In 1998 the then Secretary of State announced that £35 million had been allocated to address the issue of school toilets which could only be accessed from outside. At that time around 450 projects were supported by the Department. The money available was not a limit, but an estimate of the requirement. Most authorities brought forward projects at that time and various means have been employed since that time to identify outstanding cases.

Some schools chose to retain outside toilets to provide a useful facility adjacent to playing fields or temporary accommodation.

Students

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of students admitted to English universities were *(a)* overseas non-EU, *(b)* EU and *(c)* UK students in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212024]

Dr. Howells: The available information is given in the table.

Proportion of entrants by domicile at English HE institutions[1] *postgraduates and undergraduates*

	Percentage from each domicile			
Academic Year	*UK*	*EU*	*Other overseas*	*Total entrants*[2]
1997/98	84.6	6.9	8.5	581,890
1998/99	84.5	7.4	8.1	616,035
1999/2000	84.2	7.2	8.6	614,760
2000/01	83.5	6.9	9.7	623,175
2001/02	83.6	6.0	10.4	656,915
2002/03	82.0	5.7	12.2	699,125
2003/04	81.0	5.6	13.4	718,050

[1] Excludes the Open University.

[2] Based upon a snapshot as at 1 December.

Source:

Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Sure Start

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the effects of the Sure Start programme in Eltham. [207216]

Margaret Hodge: The South Greenwich Sure Start local programme was approved in 2000 and supports around 900 young local children and their families living in Eltham and Kidbrooke. The programme delivers a wide range of services to support local families including: a "resourceful friends" scheme in partnership with Home Start Greenwich that provides one-to-one support to families in crisis; a support group for single parents; provision of Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Educational Therapy and Portage services for families and children with special needs; provision of safety equipment which is loaned to families at a subsidised rate; a toy library; a creche; additional home visits by qualified midwife and health visitors; and early assessment and referral for children with development delay.

Since opening, Sure Start South Greenwich has helped improve the quality of life for local families. For example: the percentage of women smoking during pregnancy has fallen from 45 per cent. to 39 per cent.; the percentage of children identified with speech and language development delay has fallen from 33 per cent. to 9.73 per cent. Local health visitors report back to the local programme on all women identified with post natal depression including specific referral to the Sure Start programme to provide support. Recent Sure Start Unit monitoring reports show that the programme is seeing 858 of their 909 children (a 94 per cent. increase since the programme opened).

The programme has strong parental participation both in the management board which has 10 parent representatives (up from three since 2000)—and in activities where parents act as volunteers.

Mr. Ivan Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been allocated to the Harwich constituency under the Sure Start Scheme. [210684]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: Harwich constituency has one Mini Sure Start local programme (SSLP) and one Neighbourhood Nursery project. A total of £1,040,138 has been allocated to the constituency. This is made up of £415,000 capital and £625,138 revenue, representing £550,000 for the Mini SSLP, £420,000 for the Neighbourhood Nursery. Essex county council plan to use Harwich's Children's Centre funding allocation to further develop the SSLP and the neighbourhood nursery as one of the council's Children's Centres and £55,138 revenue and £15,000 capital have been set aside for this purpose.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure on the Sure Start scheme has been in Coventry, South in each year since the scheme has been in operation. [211204]

Margaret Hodge: There are two Sure Start local programmes operating within the constituency of Coventry South, these are Sure Start Coventry South East and Sure Start Coventry West. To date each programme has had access to the following funding.

Sure Start Coventry South East (round 2 Sure Start local programme)

£

	Revenue	Capital
2000/01	377,458	[1]—
2001/02	753,354	[1]—
2002/03	751,076	[1]—
2003/04	751,076	[1]—
2004/05	769,853	[1]—

[1] Capital allocation for the programme is £1 million

Sure Start Coventry West (round 4 Sure Start local programme)

£

	Revenue	Capital
2001/02	152,745	[1]—
2002/03	465,324	[1]—
2003/04	660,000	[1]—
2004/05	676,500	[1]—

[1] Capital allocation for the programme is £1 million

Veterinary Students

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on plans to provide assistance with variable fees for veterinary students. [211641]

Dr. Howells: The Secretary of State has not had any direct discussions with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. However, as announced in the House on 12 February 2004, Sir Alan Langlands has been commissioned to produce a report on the gateways to the professions, which will examine how the public sector and the professions can sustain and improve recruitment opportunities for graduates, especially those who do not qualify for the full £3,000 support. One of the areas which he has been looking at is veterinary science. In addition my officials are in touch with officials in Defra. We expect that Sir Alan will make recommendations on entry to the professions, which will include veterinary science, when he reports in the summer.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Immigration and Asylum

16. **Mr. Prosser:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has further to amend the immigration and asylum system. [211508]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government reviews the immigration and asylum systems continually and makes changes where considered appropriate and effective. We will shortly be publishing our plans to make significant changes to the way we manage immigration and asylum.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for indefinite leave to remain were received from April 2003 to April 2004 in *(a)* the Greater London Area and *(b)* the United Kingdom. [202846]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There were 114,305 applications made for indefinite leave to remain between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004. All applications in the UK come through a central point so it is not possible to break down applications received in Greater London or elsewhere in the UK.

These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for indefinite leave to remain were granted within 19 days during the period April 2003 to April 2004. [202881]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There were 36,185 indefinite leave to remain applications granted in 19 days or less between 1 April 2003 and 31 March 2004.

These figures are based on invalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be some data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for leave to remain were processed within 20 days, and what percentage of the total number of applications this represented, in each year since 1997, broken down by the type of application. [203222]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Type of Application—Number and percentage of applications processed in 20 days or less.

	Total application processed	Cultural exchange		Family members		Marriage/partners	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2002	288,300	1,070	34	2,630	48	8,040	26
2003	387,280	395	41	3,960	58	18,070	49
2004	281,305	520	63	5,305	75	18,685	68

	Other		Self employed business		Specialised employment	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2002	1,160	25	205	3	2,475	43
2003	1,530	30	275	3	3,555	51
2004	3,270	52	920	19	4,305	65

	Students		Visitors		Work permit/ED	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
2002	61,685	41	5,795	33	31,060	49
2003	123,440	56	8,390	50	54,535	66
2004	98,680	61	7,775	66	23,150	40

Figures are rounded to nearest 5.

Comparable data is not available prior to 2002 due to changes in data recording between old and existing databases. The information for 2004 is for the period between 1 January 2004 and 6 December 2004.

The processing time is taken as the date that the application was received until the dispatch date.

These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to enable Mr. Patrick Duncan Erasmus (Home Office Reference No. E1008322) to have his passport returned to him for the period 5 to 21 February, and then be allowed back into the UK to continue his appeal against refusal to allow him the right to remain in this country on the basis of his marriage. [209007]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to Mr. Erasmus on 25 January, informing him of the outcome of his marriage application and Mr. Erasmus's passport was returned to him on the same date.

If Mr. Erasmus leaves the United Kingdom before his appeal is determined, it will be taken that he has withdrawn his appeal. If he then wished to return to the United Kingdom he would have to apply for entry clearance in accordance with the Immigration Rules.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down the numbers of migrants to the UK in each of the last three years by *(a)* those seeking asylum, *(b)* those applying for a work permit and *(c)* EU citizens. [211258]

Mr. Browne: The latest published statistics on the numbers of people granted settlement in the UK, in the categories requested, are given in the tables.

EEA nationals are not obliged to seek settlement; the figures given relate to those who chose to do so and do not represent the total number of EEA nationals remaining indefinitely in the UK.

Detailed immigration statistics are published annually in the Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" available from the Library of the House or via the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Table 5.5 Grants of settlement by nationality, EEA nationals, 2003[1]—United Kingdom

Number of persons

Geographical region and nationality	*2003[1]*
European economic area	
Austria	55
Belgium	55
Denmark	65
Finland	40
France	605
Germany	370
Greece	225
Iceland	5
Ireland	185
Italy	430

Table 5.5 Grants of settlement by nationality, EEA nationals, 2003[1]—United Kingdom

Number of persons

Geographical region and nationality	*2003*[1]
Luxembourg	5
Netherlands	245
Norway	35
Portugal	845
Spain	255
Sweden	110
Switzerland	40
European economic area	3,565

[1] Provisional

Data rounded to the nearest 5

Table 3.1 Grants of settlement[1] by category of grant, excluding EEA nationals, 2003[2]—United Kingdom

Number of persons

Broad category of grant	*2003*[3]
Employment	
Employment with a work permit after 4 years	9,190
Spouses and dependants	10,620
Permit free employment, businessman,	
Persons of independent means	1,550
Spouses and dependants	1,050
Commonwealth citizens with a UK-born grandparent	5,275
Spouses and dependants	1,945
Total employment-related grants	29,635
Asylum	
Refugees and persons given exceptional leave to remain	12,580
Spouses and dependants	9,660
Total asylum-related grants	22,240
Family formation and reunion[4]	
Husbands[5]	17,380
Wives[5]	30,795
Children	8,955
Parents and grandparents	3,090
Other and unspecified dependents	5,855
Total family grants	66,075
Other grants on a discretionary basis	17,025
Category unknown	6,510
All grants of settlement	141,490

[1] Excludes reconsideration cases.

[2] Provisional

[3] Revised

[4] Spouses and dependants joining British citizens or persons previously granted settlement.

[5] Includes unmarried partners

Data rounded to the nearest 5

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision will be made for children aged under five years at asylum accommodation centres. [211207]

Mr. Browne: The education provider is required to provide nursery education which delivers the Foundation Stage curriculum and covers early learning goals. This provision must be delivered to the same quality as mainstream provision and must be registered with Ofsted, in accordance with The Children Act 1989.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what formal links with schools and education facilities asylum accommodation centres will have. [211208]

Mr. Browne: The education provider is required, through the contract, to establish links with the local community, including local schools. There are a number of ways in which links could be made, for example, through reciprocal visits by pupils or sporting links.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of providing education facilities at asylum accommodation centres; and who will be responsible for the costs. [211209]

Mr. Browne: We have made no discrete estimate of education facility costs as these will be procured and paid for by the prime contractor as part of their overall response to the Home Department's output specification for accommodation centres. The costs will be incorporated in the contractual capital expense and monthly operating fees that the contractor will receive from the Department as reimbursement for its services.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what facilities will be provided for children with special educational needs at asylum accommodation centres. [211210]

Mr. Browne: Education provided within accommodation centres will have the same broad range and be of equivalent quality to that provided in mainstream schools. Most children with special educational needs (SEN) will have their needs met at the accommodation centre in the same way as the majority of SEN pupils are educated in mainstream schools. We will ensure that provision in the centres reflects that usually provided in schools through School Action and School Action Plus under the SEN Code of Practice.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps the Government will take to ensure that contractors provide effective education at asylum accommodation centres; [211212]

(2) whether education facilities at asylum accommodation centres will be inspected. [211213]

Mr. Browne: Ofsted will have a power to inspect and, if requested by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, a duty to do so. The centres will be inspected within their first year of operation. Timing and frequency of subsequent visits will be dependent on the findings of the initial inspection. A copy of the inspection report will be sent to the education provider. If the findings are that special measures need to be taken to raise standards, the provider will be required to prepare an action plan in the same way as schools are required to do at present.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department from where teachers at asylum accommodation centres will be recruited; and what qualifications they will be required to have. [211214]

Mr. Browne: Teacher recruitment is a matter for the contractors. Only those who are qualified to teach children in schools will be able to teach children in accommodation centres. The staffing mix in accommodation centres will mirror, as closely as possible, that of a typical maintained school. So, the majority of teachers will be required to have Qualified

Teacher Status (QTS), and for teaching secondary school aged children, an appropriate qualification in the subject area taught.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment will be made of children's educational needs when they arrive at asylum accommodation centres. [211216]

Mr. Browne: On arrival at the accommodation centre, every child will receive an initial assessment by the education provider. This will cover previous educational experience and attainment, knowledge of English and any Special Educational Needs (SEN) requirements. Progress will be monitored by teacher assessment during the stay and, on leaving the centre, a final assessment will be made and information recorded in a Progress File which will be available to the receiving school if the child is to remain in the UK.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role will be played by local education authorities in relation to asylum accommodation centres. [211217]

Mr. Browne: The education of children in accommodation centres will be provided on site. However, the LEA will have a duty to carry out a statutory assessment to determine the Special Educational Needs of a child for whom the education provider feels unable to make appropriate Special Education provision.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what subjects will be taught within education provision in asylum accommodation centres. [211218]

Mr. Browne: All the National Curriculum subjects will be taught in accommodation centres. The Curriculum will be tailored to meet the children's needs. For example, references to the children's particular cultures and background can be included and there will be intensive support to help them learn English. All of the subject areas will be taught in English as they would be in schools.

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many refused asylum seekers were removed from the UK in *(a)* 1999, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2001; what the statistical basis was for the prediction by the Home Office that 30,000 refused asylum seekers would be removed in 2001–02; and how many refused asylum seekers were removed in 2002. [206166]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of asylum applicants removed from the United Kingdom between 1999 and 2002, inclusive, is shown in the table. The 30,000 removals target was set to drive up performance and to achieve a real step change in the number of failed asylum seekers being removed. We have since accepted that it was not achievable.

Removals and voluntary departures[1] of asylum applicants, excluding dependants, 1999 to 2002[2]

	1999	2000	2001	2002
Principal applicants	7,665	8,980	9,285	10,740
Dependants[3]	n/a	n/a	1,495	3,170
Total[3]	n/a	n/a	10,780	13,910

[1] Includes persons departing 'voluntarily' after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five, and may not sum due to rounding.

[3] Data on dependants removed have only been collected since April 2001.

n/a—not available.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many pre-2000 asylum cases applied for special consideration by 31 December 2004. [210703]

Mr. Browne: An announcement detailing the results of the exercise including the available statistical information will be made when the exercise is completed.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of initial asylum applications received from 1 August 2003 were dealt with in the target time of 13 weeks from receipt of application. [211241]

Mr. Browne: 88 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in August 2003 to June 2004 had initial decisions reached and served within 13 weeks.

The latest published information on the Home Office Public Service Agreement for 2003–04, ensuring that 75 per cent. of substantive asylum applications are decided within two months show that: 82 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) had initial decisions reached and served within two months, 90 per cent. within four months and 94 per cent. within six months (compared with 75 per cent., 85 per cent. and 88 per cent. respectively for 2002–03).

84 per cent. of applications received in Q2 (April to June) 2004 had initial decisions reached and served within two months, compared with 83 per cent. for Q1 (January to March) 2004.

Information on the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the current time taken for a decision on an asylum application that was made before 1 August 2003 is, where the initial application was considered to be valid. [211242]

Mr. Browne: The latest information on the average time between application and initial decisions made in 2003 is shown in the table.

Average time between application[1] and initial decision, for cases decided in 2003

	Average time in months[2]	*Number of cases[3]*
All applications	10	64,900
Of which:		
Pre-1997	102	700
1997	72	400
1998	59	1,100
1999	47	2,500
2000	36	2,900
2001	23	1,900
2002	6	17,600
2003	2	37,800

[1] Excluding dependants.

[2] The average length of time (in months) is calculated from date application lodged to the date of initial decision, and relates to the year in which the applications were made.

[3] Provisional figures rounded to the nearest 100.

The latest published statistics show that the speed of processing asylum applications continues to improve. 82 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in the period April 2003 to March 2004 had initial decisions reached and served within two months, compared with 75 per cent. of applications in 2002–03. This exceeded the Government's targets of 75 per cent. for 2003–04 and 65 per cent. for 2002–03.

Information on the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the Dublin Convention.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the criteria for assessing and substantiating accounts of torture and political persecution given by Zimbabwean asylum seekers differentiate between claims from genuine and non-genuine Zimbabwean refugees. [211393]

Mr. Browne: Asylum caseworkers consider the applicant's written and oral evidence in the light of the available sources of information about the country situation and particular incidents, taking account also of any medical evidence of torture, before deciding whether the individual has a well-founded fear of persecution and should be recognised as a refugee under the terms of the 1951 Convention.

Crime Statistics

18. **Simon Hughes:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of *(a)* the number of recorded crimes in (i) England and Wales and (ii) Greater London in 2010 and *(b)* the percentage of each that will be cleared up in that year. [211511]

Ms Blears: Recorded crime is not forecast beyond 2008; nor are estimates of the percentage cleared up made.

However, crime forecasts were produced for the period 2003–04 to 2007–08 and included in the modelling work for the Home Office Strategic Plan.

19. **John Mann** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make an assessment of trends in the level of acquisitive crimes in west Bassetlaw. [211512]

Caroline Flint: The available information relates to the Bassetlaw Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and shows that between 2002–03 and 2003–04 there was a fall in all acquisitive crime of 244 offences or 4 per cent.

Race Equality/Community Cohesion

20. **Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Government's strategy for race equality and community cohesion. [211513]

Mr. Clarke: I published "Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society", our race equality and community cohesion strategy, on 19 January. The aim of the strategy is to deliver a cohesive society built on opportunities for all, establishing mutual expectations of all citizens and tackling hatred and discrimination.

This is not about putting all people from minority ethnic communities in one category and those from the majority in another. Rather, it is about identifying and responding to the specific needs of different communities.

The strategy is not rhetoric. It is focused on practical action and measurement, with a comprehensive cross-Government Public Service Agreement target to monitor and reduce race inequalities between 2005 and 2008.

Traffic Police

21. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* responsibilities he has allocated and *(b)* directives he has issued to traffic police. [211514]

Ms Blears: All police officers, including those dedicated to traffic duties have the same powers. Their deployment and operational practice is a matter for individual chief officers. The first three National Policing Plans make it clear that we expect the police to give roads policing appropriate attention and we have built on this by the Roads Policing Strategy statement issued jointly earlier this month by the Home Office, the Department for Transport and the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Anti-terrorism Legislation

22. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions his Department has had with Muslim leaders in the UK regarding anti-terrorism legislation. [211515]

Mr. Clarke: I and other Ministers have met representatives of the Muslim communities, including the Muslim Council of Great Britain, on several occasions to discuss their concerns. They have also met with officials in the Home Office and relevant officers in the police service.

Representatives of the Muslim communities have also played an active part in "Counter Terrorism Powers: Reconciling Security and Liberty in an Open Society"—the consultation process on the Government's counter-terrorism powers, both by submitting written responses and in attending public consultation events.

Driving (Mobile Telephones)

23. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with chief constables regarding the deployment of officers to enforce the law relating to driving while using hand-held mobile telephones. [211517]

Caroline Flint: It is for chief officers to decide how most effectively to deploy their resources in accordance with local and strategic plans and the National Policing Plan. We have not specifically discussed this issue with them. The Association of Chief Police Officers has welcomed the new specific offence as a straightforward method of dealing with this dangerous behaviour and the police will enforce the offence as operationally appropriate.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been prosecuted for driving while using a hand-held mobile phone since the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) (Amendment) (No. 4) Regulations 2003 came into force; what the Government are doing to enforce legislation in this area; and if he will make a statement. [210928]

Ms Blears: Data for 2003 on police actions (written warnings, fixed penalty notices and court proceedings) related to the new offence of driving while using a hand held mobile telephone will not be available until late March 2005.

Antisocial Behaviour

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to encourage liaison between the different authorities and bodies with a role in reducing antisocial behaviour. [210759]

Ms Blears: The Government recognises that partnership working at a local level is the key to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour effectively. We are supporting agencies to identify and deliver local solutions to local problems by working together within the Crime and Disorder Partnership framework.

Our TOGETHER campaign, which targets a wide range of practitioners, actively promotes partnership working and offers practical assistance that can help local agencies to work together in delivering effective interventions.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the antisocial behaviour help line and report line. [210730]

Ms Blears: 'It's Your Call' is part of the next step of the TOGETHER campaign. This initiative is part of the commitment made by Action Areas to raise levels of action and to make services more accessible to the public. Newcastle, Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland are the first areas in the country to go live with the new 'It's Your Call' phone line. The service will be launched in 21 additional TOGETHER Action Areas and Trailblazers in a phased approach over the next six weeks.

A new single number 0845 605 222, encouraging people to report antisocial behaviour, will be promoted on poster sites and on phone boxes in participating areas. Running in parallel, two million door-drops highlighting the new service will be distributed, and postcards giving feedback when action has been taken will also be utilised by the participating areas.

The TOGETHER ActionLine is a separate service which provides help and advice to practitioners to improve their response to antisocial behaviour. The ActionLine, complimented by the TOGETHER website helps practitioners to become confident in using the powers available to them and gives them access to innovative and creative solutions and enable them to network and share knowledge and successes.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the use of antisocial behaviour orders. [211510]

Ms Blears: We constantly review issues relating to the use of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) through our contact with local practitioners.

We produce a range of quarterly statistics that allow us to assess the use of ASBOs, and data on breach of ASBOs are produced annually.

A major research project is under way to evaluate the impact of ASBOs on communities.

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in the Tees Valley, broken down by constituency. [210614]

Ms Blears: Available information, up to 30 June 2004, by local authority area only is given in the table.

Data up to 30 September 2004 will be available shortly.

Number of ASBOs, as notified to the Home Office by all courts, and where restrictions are imposed within local authority areas within the Tees Valley region[1], from 1 April 1999 up to 30 June 2004

Area	*Total ASBOs issued*
Tees Valley region[1]	41
Cleveland	34
of which:	
from 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 by pfa	1
from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004 by local authority area	33
Hartlepool BC	7
Middlesbrough BC	17
Redcar and Cleveland council	3
Stockton on Tees BC	6
Not given	0
Durham (part)	7
of which:	
from 1 April 1999 to 31 May 2000 by pfa	0
from 1 June 2000 to 30 June 2004 by local authority area	7
Darlington BC	7

[1] Tees Valley region comprises the five following local authority areas: Darlington BC, Hartlepool BC, Middlesbrough BC, Redcar and Cleveland Council and Stockton on Tees BC.

Note:

Between 1 April 1999 and 31 May 2000 data available by police force area (pfa) only.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what personal details of the recipients of antisocial behaviour orders are recorded. [210733]

Ms Blears: The following personal details of recipients of Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) are recorded on the Home Office ASBO Database: full name, age/date of birth and sex.

Blasphemy Law

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons he has decided not to bring forward legislative proposals to repeal the law on blasphemy; and if he will make a statement. [207701]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have no immediate plans to amend the laws on blasphemy. We acknowledge that there are a wide variety of views on whether the blasphemy laws should be retained, repealed or extended, but we have not sought to amend the current law on blasphemy in the absence of a consensus on how to proceed. For example in a recent ICM poll for *The Guardian* although 46 per cent. of the public believe that the blasphemy laws should be repealed, 38 per cent. believe it should be kept on the statute book. We will however, keep the issue under review, particularly as the benefits of the new provision against incitement to religious hatred are realised.

Carers (Police Checks)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recommended maximum time is for police checks on carers working with *(a)* vulnerable adults and *(b)* children. [208073]

Ms Blears: There is no recommended maximum time for police checks on carers working with vulnerable adults and children. The Criminal Records Bureau aims to complete disclosure applications across all sectors within the shortest time possible.

The Criminal Records Bureau has published service standards, which are to issue 90 per cent. of standard disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of enhanced disclosures within four weeks for all employment sectors. The bureau has achieved this service standard on an annualised basis since November 2003.

CCTV

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what grant schemes are available to fund the capital costs of CCTV; what criteria are used to assess applications; what recent applications have been received; and what future grant funding will be available. [210613]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 24 January 2004]:* Under the Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) CCTV Initiative, £170 million was provided to local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to set up 684 public space CCTV schemes across England and Wales, to tackle crime and disorder and the fear of crime.

The CRP CCTV Initiative ended in 2002, but funding opportunities remain available under the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) and the BCU Fund. £72.3 million and £74 million was made available in 2003–04 and 2004–05 respectively from the BSCF and was allocated directly to CDRPs to tackle local crime priorities using a raft of interventions, including CCTV. A further £50 million was allocated to police forces under the BCU Fund in both years. In addition, police forces may include CCTV provision at their discretion from police capital grant to support local capital programmes. The Home Office has allocated a total of £210 million in capital provision for 2005–06, an increase of 13 per cent. over provision for 2004–05.

In the majority of cases, specific applications for CCTV capital funding are not required or made. Any capital spend on CCTV is usually built into CDRPs' plans for the BSCF and BCU Funds.

Alongside police capital grant money, grant funding for future projects is, as in the past, available to CDRPs under BSCF and to police and CDRPs under the BCU Fund.

Child Deaths in Custody

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the deaths of children in custody since 1997. [211509]

Ms Blears: The death of any young person in custody (or elsewhere) is a terrible tragedy. I send my deepest sympathy for the family of Gareth Price, who died on 20 January after being found hanging while on remand at Lancaster Farms Young Offender Institution. The Government take very seriously the issue of self-harm and suicide in the juvenile custodial estate and have taken a range of steps to try to prevent it. We are currently looking at what further measures may be needed.

Class A Drugs

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to make *(a)* Fly Agaric and *(b)* any of its preparations and derivatives a Class A Drug. [199679]

Caroline Flint: There are no plans to control Fly Agaric or any of its derivatives or preparations as its prevalence in the UK is negligible.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letter dated 11 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Rahman Mohammed Mustafa. [210838]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 20 January.

Criminal Justice Intervention Panels

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* role, *(b)* aim and *(c)* purpose will be of the criminal justice intervention panels; and when they will be fully functional. [202689]

Caroline Flint: The Drug Interventions Programme (formerly Criminal Justice Interventions Programme) is a critical part of the Government's national strategy for tackling drugs. The programme aims to make the most of opportunities provided by the criminal justice system to get drug misusing offenders out of crime and into treatment.

The 'intensive' elements of the Drug Interventions Programme are currently operational in 66 police Basic Command Units (47 drug action teams) with high levels of acquisitive crime. From April 2005–06, we will expand the intensive elements of the programme to a further 32 Basic Command Units covering 23 DATs. These elements include testing for Class A drugs following charge for certain trigger offences.

The programme will be enhanced by measures included in the Drugs Bill, which entered Commons Committee on 27 January 2005.

Between April and November 2004, over 9,000 people entered treatment through the programme.

Early evidence shows that acquisitive crime is falling faster in Drug Interventions Programme areas than non-programme areas.

Custody Officers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the *(a)* qualifications and *(b)* skills required by civilian custody officers; and if he will make a statement. [210981]

Ms Blears: The skills and knowledge required for the post of custody officer are identical whether or not the statutory functions required under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) were to be carried out by a police sergeant, as currently provided for under PACE or, under Clause 111 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill, for a staff custody officer.

Currently, there is no formal qualification required before a police officer can take on the role of custody sergeant. CENTREX have developed a national training programme for custody officers. It is a matter for individual force policy on training provided before the appointment of police officers to this role.

National Occupational Standards for the Police Sector developed by Skills for Justice set out the competencies and skills required for authorising and managing police detention and form an Integrated Competency Framework. In terms of the custody officer, the competency framework focuses on the key areas of making detention decisions; managing the detention of individuals; and authorising and reviewing continued detention.

In addition, further work is currently under way with stakeholders and the National Centre for Policing Excellence on developing guidance on how these standards are to be achieved. This will be published later this year. Combined with the competency framework, we will have in place definitive standards for police and police staff employed in the custody suite.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the European Union directives and regulations relating to his Department that have been implemented in each of the last two years, specifying *(a)* the title and purpose of each, *(b)* the cost to public funds of each and *(c)* the cost to businesses of each. [200771]

Caroline Flint: The Home Office has implemented eight European Community Directives and/or Regulations in the time specified.

1. Council Regulation (EC) no. 1030/2002 laying down a uniform format for residence permits for third-country nationals. Adopted 27/11/2003

(a) In implementing the Council Decision the UK introduced the UK Residence Permit (UKRP). It is a secure vignette, in an EU-wide format that replaces ink stamps for the purpose of granting leave to enter or remain in the UK for periods in excess of six months.

2. Council Regulation (EC) NO. 333/2002 on a uniform format for forms for affixing the visa issued by member states to persons holding travel documents not recognised by the member states drawing up the form. Adopted 18/02/2002

(a) Where member states do not recognise the country or authority that issued a person's travel document, the appropriate visa is stuck onto a separate form. The purpose of Regulation 333/2002 is to ensure that member states adopt a standard, recognisable format for the forms used in these circumstances. The Regulation also prescribes various security features which will help prevent counterfeiting and falsification.

3. Council Regulation no. 343/2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the member states by a third country national (Dublin Convention II). Adopted 18/02/2003

4. Commission Regulation (EC) No. 1560/2003 of 2 September 2003 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Regulation (EC) No. 343/2003 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the member state responsible for examining an asylum application lodged in one of the member states by a third country national.

(a) Provisions of the Dublin II Regulation entered into force on 1 September 2003 and replaced the 1990 Dublin Convention, which was operational since 1997. The Dublin arrangements enable member states to identify whether another member state is responsible for determining an individual's application, and to return them to that responsible State.

5. Council Directive 2002/90/EC defining the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence. Adopted 22/11/02

(a) The purpose of this Directive is to provide a definition of the facilitation of illegal immigration and consequently to render more effective the implementation of the Framework Decision in order to prevent that offence.

6. Council Regulation (EC) 2725/2000 concerning the establishment of 'Eurodac' for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of the Dublin Regulation (Eurodac Regulation). Adopted 11/12/00

7. Council Regulation (EC) No. 407/2002 of 28 February 2003 laying down certain rules to implement Regulation (EC) No. 2725/2000 concerning the establishment of "Eurodac" for the comparison of fingerprints for the effective application of the Dublin Convention.

(a) The Central Unit database established by the Eurodac Regulations became operational on 15 January 2003. The Eurodac system provides for the computerised exchange and storage of fingerprint information on asylum claimants and illegal entrants apprehended when attempting to cross the external frontier of the EU. Eurodac evidence underpins the effective operation of the Dublin arrangements, now provided by the Dublin II Regulation (above) to secure returns and rapidly identify multiple asylum applications.

8. Council Directive 2001/51/EC supplementing the provision of Article 26 of the convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 (Carriers' Liability Directive). Adopted 28/06/01

(a) The aim of this Directive is to supplement the provisions of Article 26 of the Convention implementing the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985, signed at Schengen on 19 June 1990(5) (hereinafter referred to as "the Schengen Convention") and to define certain conditions with respect to their implementation.

Records of the cost of implementation of these measures to public funds are not kept by the Home Department; to endeavour to do so would incur disproportionate cost. This applies to all of the aforementioned.

Records of the cost of each measure to business are monitored through the production of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs). These project the likely costs on businesses, charities or voluntary organisations.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on entertainment by his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204355]

Fiona Mactaggart: Home Office expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety based on the principles set out in Government Accounting.

The following figures relate to the cost of entertaining non-civil servants (hospitality) and civil servants (management entertainment). Details of such expenditure have only been held centrally since 1997–98 and are not recorded in a way that allows expenditure to be broken down into the categories requested.

The increase in expenditure from 1999–2000 is due to an element of incorrect expenditure coding, resulting in the inclusion of accommodation and subsistence costs. It is not possible, without incurring disproportionate cost, to separate these costs and, consequently, these figures are not directly comparable with those provided in previous years.

£

	Total expenditure
1997–98	37,747
1998–99	44,415
1999–2000	94,370
2000–01	108,925
2001–02	75,808
2002–03	70,591
2003–04	89,072

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206680]

Fiona Mactaggart: The figures are as follows:

£

	2003–04	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99*	*1997–98*
Electricity[1]	2,783,686	2,576,900	2,562,161	2,017,331	1,928,377	1,441,853	1,373,063
Water[1]	192,341	175,993	323,350	351,987	311,947	n/a	n/a
Gas[1]	579,546	692,005	838,530	624,255	347,556	359,219	285,521
Telephones[2]	7,487,813	6,520,240	6,138,198	6,392,398	4,863,355	5,136,791	8,354,664
Mobile Telephones[3]	1,318,444	1,289,000	960,078	786,525	495,335	333,467	527,558
Televisions[4]	21,471	16,283	17,162	n/a	15,038	8,572	n/a

n/a = Not available.

[1] These figures are taken from Environmental monitoring data and are for key sites only. They include Home Office and Prison Service HQs, but exclude prisons. The number of key sites captured within these figures has increased since 1997 by over 100 per cent.

[2] Figures for telephones includes, exchange rentals, calls, computer line links, CBX costs, GTN rentals and call costs, video conference costs, GDN costs and engineering and development costs. These figures are taken from accounting data and include all Home Office sites (excluding Prison Service and prisons).

[3] Figures include pager charges. These figures are taken from accounting data and include all Home Office sites (excluding Prison Service and prisons).

[4] Figures are for Cable Television charges for the HO central London estate (other than Prison Service).

Dispersal Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many section 30 dispersal orders each authority has applied for in each year since their introduction. [210729]

Ms Blears: It is estimated that dispersal powers have been authorised in over 400 areas between January 2004, when the powers came into force and September 2004. We do not have a breakdown by local authority area.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for which offences fixed penalty notices may be issued by non-police personnel. [210052]

Ms Blears: Under the Police Reform Act 2002 chief constables may accredit a community safety accreditation scheme and individuals to take part in such a scheme. Accredited persons have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for:

Cycling on a footway under section 54 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988

Dog fouling under section 4 of the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996

Littering under section 88 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

Fly-posting and graffiti under section 43 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Accredited persons may also be authorised by a chief constable to issue certain fixed penalty notices under the penalty notice for disorder scheme. The table lists these penalty offences. It is a matter for the chief constable which of these offences accredited persons may issue penalty notices for.

Other Government Departments also have fixed penalty notice schemes where non-police personnel may issue fixed penalties.

Penalty Notice For Disorder Scheme: List of penalty offences

S5, Criminal Law Act 1967	Wasting police time. Giving false report.
s127(2) of the Communications Act 2003	Use of a public electronic communications network in order to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety.
(England only) S49 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority.
S31, Fire Services Act 1947	Knowingly giving a false alarm to a fire brigade.
S5, Public Order Act 1986	Causing, harassment, alarm or distress.
S80, Explosives Act 1875	Throwing fireworks.
s169A of the Licensing Act 1964	Sell alcohol to person under 18.
s169C(2) of the Licensing Act 1964	Purchase in licensed premises of alcohol for person under 18.
s169C(3) of the Licensing Act 1964	Purchase of alcohol for consumption in a bar in licensed premises for person under 18.
s169F of the Licensing Act 1964	Delivery of alcohol to person under 18 or allowing such delivery.
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Breach of fireworks curfew.
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Possession of a category 4 firework.
Fireworks Regulations 2004 under s11 of the Fireworks Act 2003	Contravention of a prohibition or failure to comply with a requirement imposed by or under fireworks regulations or making false statements, specifically; Possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework.
S55, British Transport Commission Act 1949	Trespassing on a railway.
S56, British Transport Commission Act 1949	Throwing stones at a train.
S12, Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001	Consuming alcohol in designated public place, contrary to requirement by constable not to do so.
169E(1) of the Licensing Act 1964	Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in licensed premises.
169E(2)of the Licensing Act 1964	Allowing consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in a bar in licensed premises.

Fraud and Forgery (Lancashire)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* fraud and *(b)* forgery offences have been reported to Lancashire police in each year since 1997; and how many led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction. [209996]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the tables. Tables 1 and 2 give the number of offences recorded by the police in the Lancashire police force area. Recorded crime data are published on a financial year basis.

Table 3 gives the number of defendants proceeded against and found guilty in the Lancashire police force area. Court proceedings data are published on a calendar year basis. Data for 2004 will not be available until the autumn.

Because recorded crime deals with offences and court proceedings deals with defendants, the two data sets are not directly comparable.

Table 1: Fraud and forgery offences recorded by the police in Lancashire, 1997–98 to 2001–02

Number of offences

	Fraud	*Forgery*
1997–98[1]	3,340	217
1998–99[2]	4,279	167
1999–2000	3,831	193
2000–01	5,828	107
2001–02	6,155	183

[1] The number of crimes recorded using the coverage and rules in use until 31 March 1998.

[2] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Note:

The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Fraud and forgery offences recorded by the police in Lancashire, 2002–03 and 2003–04

Number of offences

	Fraud	*Forgery*
2002–03	5,695	144
2003–04	6,991	166

Note:

The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Table 3: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and found guilty at all courts for fraud and forgery[1] in the Lancashire police force area, 1997 to 2003

	Fraud		Forgery	
	Proceeded against	Found guilty	Proceeded against	Found guilty
1997	742	553	294	206
1998	872	667	236	161
1999	804	619	265	197
2000	759	546	171	130
2001	736	558	165	107
2002	739	540	199	133
2003	626	489	224	144

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been conducted by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies into compatibility issues between the Facial Images National Database and the National Identity Register. [208286]

Mr. Browne: The Identity Cards Programme is actively researching the sets of standards which will need to be specified as requirements for the applicants' facial images. Both the Identity Cards Programme and the Facial Images National Database project are working towards adopting emerging international standards for best practice in facial image capture and storage. These come chiefly from the International Civil Aviation Organisation, the US National Institute for Standards and Technology and the International Standards Organisation.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* secondees and *(c)* consultants are employed in developing identity cards; and if he will make a statement. [208990]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: The identity cards programme currently employs; 39 civil servants, two seconded staff and 45 consultants, on informing processes, policies and costs associated with the development of identity cards. Four of the civil servants work primarily on shorter term measures to counter identity fraud.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he expects the provisions for the introduction of identity cards in Wales to differ from those in the rest of the UK. [208841]

Mr. Browne: The identity cards scheme will operate on a UK-wide basis and the provisions for the introduction of identity cards will therefore apply throughout the UK, including in Wales. However, it would be for the National Assembly for Wales to decide whether, and if so how, production of a card will be required to access public services for which it is responsible.

It's Your Call

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the estimated cost has been of *(a)* publishing and *(b)* delivering It's Your Call flyers; and if he will make a statement; [210449]

(2) what the cost was of the It's Your Call launch in the North East on Monday 17 January 2005; and if he will make a statement; [210451]

(3) what the estimated cost is of *(a)* establishing and *(b)* maintaining the It's Your Call 0845 605 2222 telephone number; and if he will make a statement; [210452]

(4) how much *(a)* bill board and *(b)* telephone box advertising space is being used to display It's Your Call advertising; where the sites are; how much the advertising space cost; and for how long each advertising space will be maintained. [210453]

Ms Blears: It's Your Call was launched on Monday, 17 January 2005 in Newcastle and cost an estimated £1,800 for production of boards and advertising bikes. The estimated cost of *(a)* establishing *(b)* maintaining It's Your Call is £63,000 including all technology and call-centre costs. The cost of publishing the flyers is an estimated £70,000 and the estimated cost of distribution and storage is £50,000. 900 six sheet poster sites and advertising in 300 phone boxes have been booked and purchased through the Central Office for Information. The advertising space cost £366,731 to purchase and will be maintained for a period of four weeks in each area. I will supply full details of site locations to my hon. friend when the information is made available.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what discussions he had with Superintendent Thwaites prior to Southend-on-Sea police agreeing to become a Home Office Together Action Area and to take part in the first phase of the It's Your Call; when these dicussions took place; and how long they lasted; [210450]

(2) what discussions he had with Chief Constable Stevens prior to the agreement that Southend-on-Sea police would become a Home Office Together Action Area and take part in the first phase of the It's Your Call; when these discussions took place; and how long they lasted. [211057]

Ms Blears: On the 9 of August 2004 the National Director for Anti-Social Behaviour wrote to all Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships requesting expressions of interest in being a Together Action Area. On the 13 of October 2004 during a visit to Southend, Officials from the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU) and Southend Council agreed that Southend would become an Action Area. During the same visit officials also met with Chief Superintendent Thwaites and Superintendent Currell.

On 30 of November Officials from ASBU agreed with Lee Harris, Assistant Chief Executive for Southend Council that Southend would be included in Phase 1 of It's Your Call.

Ministerial Security

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Home Secretary has different levels of security depending on whether he is on ministerial, constituency or private business. [203241]

Mr. Charles Clarke: We do not comment on personal security arrangements.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons he has not yet provided substantive answers to questions reference 202178, 202631, 202632, 202633 and 202750. [203832]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The former Home Secretary, my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside provided answers to questions 202178, 202631, 202632 and 202750 on 14 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 1020W and to 202633 on 15 December 2004, *Official Report,* column 1165W.

Police

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers were available for duty in the Metropolitan police area in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005. [210407]

Ms Blears: Information on the number of officers available for duty has only been collected since 2003 and is on the basis of headcount rather than full-time equivalent strength. Officers available for duty excludes those absent for career breaks, compassionate leave, maternity/paternity leave, special leave, study leave, long term sick leave and suspended officers. The number of officers available for duty is a snap shot of the position on 31 March: the number will vary from day to day. On 31 March 2004, the Metropolitan Police Service had a headcount strength of 29,534 officers available for duty.

The table sets out the full-time equivalent strength of the Metropolitan Police Service. The latest available data on police numbers is for 31 August 2004.

As at 31 March	*Number of police officers*
1997	26,677
2001	24,878
2004 (31 August)	30,021

Full-time equivalent strength

Following boundary changes on 1 April 2000 with Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey, the Metropolitan police district was reduced in size and some resources were transferred to the other three forces. Metropolitan Police Service strength data prior to April 2000 is therefore not comparable with later information.

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action his Department plans to take in response to the findings of Professor Sir William Stewart on the low frequency of the new police communication system; and if he will make a statement. [210693]

Caroline Flint: We welcome the conclusion of the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) in its report "Mobile Phones and Health 2004" that the special features of TETRA technology used by the new police radio communication system are unlikely to prove a hazard to health. Sir William Stewart is Chairman of the NRPB. The report by the board of the NRPB raised no new issues specific to TETRA for further investigation: we will, however, continue with our comprehensive programme of research into previously identified areas of uncertainty.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been available for duty in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the past five years. [210957]

Ms Blears: Information on the number of officers available for duty has only been collected since 2003. The information is available only at force level and cannot be provided for Basic Command Units.

Basic Command Unit police numbers have been collected since 2002. The table provides police officer strength for the Stoke-on-Trent Basic Command Unit.

Stoke-on-Trent Division

As at 31 March:	*Number of officers*
2002	365
2003	Not available
2004	587

Full-time equivalent

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of members of the police force in *(a)* Burnley and *(b)* Lancashire are community support officers; what powers community support officers have in Lancashire; and if he will make a statement. [210967]

Ms Blears: The Home Office collects data for police personnel only down as far as basic command unit (BCU) level. Burnley is part of the Pennine Division (BCU).

On 31 March 2004 (the latest date for which comprehensive data is published) Lancashire Constabulary had 3,550 police officers, 1,642 police staff (other than community support officers (CSOs) and traffic wardens), 110 CSOs and 17 traffic wardens. CSOs formed 2.07 per cent. of the total strength. There were also 336 special constables.

Later data is available for police officers and CSOs in Lancashire. At the end of August 2004 there were 3,567 police officers and in December, 117 CSOs.

The powers designated to CSOs in Lancashire Constabulary by the Chief Constable are: the power to issued fixed penalty notices, to deal with alcohol consumption in designated places; to confiscate alcohol from young persons; to enter and search any premises for the purpose of saving life and limb or preventing serious damage to property; to require the name and address of a person acting in an antisocial manner; to remove abandoned vehicles; to seize vehicles used to cause alarm and distress; to confiscate tobacco from children; and the power of detention for 30 minutes pending the arrival of a constable.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were *(a)* in the Nottinghamshire Constabulary and *(b)* the City of Nottingham Division in each year since 1994; and what projections there are for numbers of officers in future years. [211015]

Ms Blears: Information on police strength is set out in the table. Data on the number of officers in Basic Command Units has only been collected since 2002, but is only available for the city of Nottingham BCU from March 2003.

Nottinghamshire Constabulary

Year (as at 31 March)	*Number of police officers*	*Nottingham (C) Division—police officer numbers*
1994	2,328	—
1995	2,319	—
1996	2,318	—
1997	2,323	—
1998	2,323	—
1999	2,225	—
2000	2,204	—
2001	2,212	—
2002	2,330	Not available
2003	2,411	821
2004	2,484	855
2004 (31 August)	2,523	Not available

Nottinghamshire Constabulary had record strength at the end of August 2004, which is supported by 69 community support officers.

The Home Secretary has not set projections of police strength for future years for England and Wales, or for individual forces. The number of police officers in any force is a matter for the Chief Constable and the Police Authority, subject to the available budget provision

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many enquiry and station police staff have been dismissed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; [211055]

(2) how many *(a)* general building staff and handymen, *(b)* plant maintenance staff and *(c)* estates managers have been dismissed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; [211058]

(3) how many *(a)* firearms managers and *(b)* firearms clerks have been dismissed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; [211061]

(4) how many *(a)* senior communications operators (Police), *(b)* communications operators (Police) and *(c)* communications officers have been dismissed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; [211062]

(5) how many *(a)* central ticket unit managers, *(b)* central ticket clerks (speeding fines unit) and *(c)* fixed penalty notice processing unit staff have been dismissed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; [211063]

(6) how many criminal justice police staff have been dismissed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997. [211067]

Ms Blears: This information is not centrally collected.

Police National Computer

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how many occasions the police national computer was accessed unlawfully in each of the last five years; and in how many cases those responsible were *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted. [210163]

Ms Blears: The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO), who are responsible for maintaining the police national computer (PNC), at Hendon, are unaware of any unlawful access to the PNC by its staff or members of the general public during the time period stated or before.

Statistics recording the number of occasions a police officer has accessed the police national computer unlawfully and then been prosecuted and convicted for this offence in each of the last five years are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police Retirement

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have retired in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* rank and *(b)* police force area. [210018]

Ms Blears: Figures on the number of police officer retirements in England and Wales between 1996–97 and 2003–04 are given in the table.

These figures are for retirements with either an ordinary or ill-health pension and are broken down by *(a)* rank and *(b)* police force area respectively.

Police officer retirements by rank in England and Wales 1996–97 to 2003–04

	Chief constable	*Assistant chief constable*	*ACPO*	*Chief superintendent*	*Superintendent*
1996–97	7	20	—	—	206
1997–98	7	13	—	—	291
1998–99	12	17	—	—	180
1999–00	8	24	—	—	158
2000–01	5	16	—	—	156
2001–02	4	15	—	—	154
2002–03[1]	—	—	—	—	—
2003–04[2]	—	—	18	58	74

	Chief inspector	*Inspector*	*Sergeant*	*Constable*	*Total*
1996–97	210	537	863	2,512	4,355
1997–98	238	562	928	2,639	4,678
1998–99	171	443	778	2,511	4,112
1999–00	149	421	758	2,411	3,929
2000–01	148	430	780	2,269	3,804
2001–02	136	395	841	2,530	4,075
2002–03[1]	—	—	—	—	—
2003–04[2]	107	341	627	1,955	3,180

[1] Data is not available for all forces for 2002–03

[2] No data provided by one force for second quarter

Following changes to police personnel data collection, data on retirements by rank have been collected quarterly since 1 April 2002.

Police officer retirements by police force area

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	132	124	80	104	109	121	111	65
Bedfordshire	32	46	49	39	31	26	32	27
Cambridgeshire	46	34	46	37	28	43	44	41
Cheshire	50	82	61	67	62	78	93	66
City of London	21	38	27	29	26	32	22	26
Cleveland	38	25	53	53	65	57	50	44
Cumbria	58	45	36	50	41	30	37	32
Derbyshire	65	77	50	36	37	56	78	54
Devon and Cornwall	114	111	96	112	108	96	100	87
Dorset	48	88	45	49	54	58	36	45
Durham	47	51	32	32	35	51	52	40
Dyfed Powys	26	25	20	31	30	21	35	25
Essex	75	100	96	99	75	72	80	87
Gloucestershire	45	56	51	36	35	49	48	23
Greater Manchester	319	329	282	235	239	176	198	140
Gwent	46	32	28	49	43	79	46	49
Hampshire	79	70	67	129	107	121	132	109
Hertfordshire	54	51	45	67	48	65	52	46
Humberside	64	83	64	76	74	64	61	47
Kent	80	89	79	102	103	139	106	94
Lancashire[1]	59	111	75	78	105	107	n/a	79
Leicestershire	51	59	47	46	56	52	58	38
Lincolnshire	42	33	49	58	45	50	47	33
Merseyside	217	151	112	116	124	163	154	112
Metropolitan Police	910	983	1,065	815	686	717	651	579
Norfolk	65	66	47	45	49	51	65	32
Northamptonshire	24	44	16	25	26	28	31	27
Northumbria	136	151	115	103	91	107	106	97
North Wales	59	46	62	49	60	51	52	6
North Yorkshire	50	38	29	51	55	53	36	41
Nottinghamshire	71	92	82	67	75	87	88	79
South Wales	119	136	139	105	131	101	103	108
South Yorkshire	67	92	100	100	104	133	106	101
Staffordshire	86	126	69	51	50	63	79	58
Suffolk	55	51	26	37	52	36	46	36
Surrey	56	73	50	54	52	62	57	44
Sussex	141	128	127	107	106	98	90	88
Thames Valley	125	123	92	109	91	104	128	108
Warwickshire	26	45	42	25	33	27	29	26
West Mercia	83	69	71	79	114	80	75	59
West Midlands	247	294	203	184	158	216	196	156
West Yorkshire	160	163	142	153	158	223	177	140
Wiltshire	67	48	45	40	33	32	44	29
Total	4,355	4,678	4,112	3,929	3,804	4,075	3,831	3,223

[1] Data for 2002–03 not available

Police Stations

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* rural police stations and *(b)* beat houses have closed in each year since 1997. [210670]

Ms Blears: This information is not held centrally.

Prison Service

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds of *(a)* cost and *(b)* anticipated benefit the decision was made to extend the programme of performance testing in the Prison Service to establishments that are not designated as failing. [209454]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service has no plans to extend performance testing to establishments that are not failing. Performance testing has proved to be an extremely successful mechanism for driving improvement in poor performing establishments. Although the National Offender Management Service has announced that the formal programme of performance testing will cease with the return of market testing, the Prison Service will retain performance testing as part of an internal performance improvement programme designed to help the Service compete effectively in the more contestable environment. Any poor performing establishment that fails to recognise the need for change and therefore presents a poor prospect at any future market test may be performance tested.

Sentencing (Costs)

Mr. Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the average cost per annum of supervising an individual on a community punishment order in England and Wales was in the latest period for which figures are available; [207068]

(2) what the average cost per annum of supervising an individual on a community rehabilitation order in England and Wales was in the latest period for which figures are available; [207070]

(3) what the average cost per annum of supervising an individual on community rehabilitation and community punishment order in England and Wales was in the latest period for which figures are available. [207071]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 10 January 2004]:* The average budgeted cost per annum of supervising an individual on the following orders is as follows.

	£
	Cost
Community Punishment Order	1,890
Community Rehabilitation Order	2,830
Community Punishment and Rehabilitation Order	2,750

These figures cover all local Probation Boards' costs including the cost of probation officer training. These figures are derived from a costing exercise undertaken for the first time in 2003–04 by the 42 local boards.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the Senior Investigation Officers' Manual has been amended to specify that any initial approach by the police to former residents of care homes should be no more than a general invitation to provide information to the investigation team; [207459]

(2) what guidance was available to police forces involved in historical sex abuse operations prior to the introduction of the Senior Investigations Officers' handbook in 2002. [207332]

Ms Blears: The Senior Investigations Handbook served to bring together existing guidance on investigations generally and for investigating child abuse, including where allegations are made about historical incidents. This included the Working Together Guidance which has a chapter dedicated to historical allegations and the Manual for Senior Investigation Officers managing Major Incidents—Major Incident Rooms: the Standardisation of Administrative Procedures for the Management of Serious and Series Crime.

The Government's Response to the Home Affairs Committee's Report published in April 2003 indicated that the Senior Investigations Handbook already included guidance that the SIO in any case must always record, as a matter of routine, justification for using the dip sampling or investigation method for making initial approaches to former residents of care homes.

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has established a multi-agency working group to review the SIO Handbook which was produced in 2002. That review group has cognisance of all recommendations made by the Committee and in particular on-going concerns raised by my hon. Friend and will ensure amendments in line with police investigative policy. This will include adding further safeguards to the initial approach for evidence as considered by the group. I understood that the chair of that group has now invited my hon. Friend to present her concerns to the group in person.

Special Constables

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many special constables there were in the Pennine division of Lancashire constabulary in each year since 1995. [204987]

Ms Blears: Statistics for the number of special constables in each force basic command unit are not collected by the Home Office. Since 1998 data on the strength of special constabularies have been published annually in Home Office statistical bulletins on police service strength, copies of which are available in the Library. The total number of special constables in Lancashire constabulary from 1995–2004 is as follows:

	Number
31 March 1995	608
31 March 1996	553
31 March 1997	483
31 March 1998	489
31 March 1999	449
31 March 2000	382
31 March 2001	360
31 March 2002	363
31 March 2003	351
31 March 2004	336

Standard List Offences

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been convicted of a standard list offence, broken down by *(a)* gender, *(b)* age on appearance in court and *(c)* previous convictions; and what sentences each received. [210502]

Paul Goggins: The available information contained in the table gives the number of offenders found guilty at all courts of a standard list offence, sentenced and the sentences they received, England and Wales 2003.

Information on sentencing by previous convictions was last published in chapter 9 of Criminal statistics, England and Wales 2000 (cm 5312). This was based on a sample of offenders sentenced in 2000. Updated information, for those sentenced in 2001 and 2002 will be published in Sentencing Statistics, England and Wales, 2003 next month.

Number of persons proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty and sentenced at all courts for standard list offences[1,2]
England and Wales 2003 Sentence breakdown

Sex/age group	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Sentenced*	*Absolute/ conditional discharge*	*Fine*	*Community sentence*	*Fully suspended sentence*	*Immediate custody*	*Otherwise dealt with*
Males									
Aged 10–11	1,206	711	711	91	5	588	n/a	—	27
Aged 12–14	18,461	11,787	11,787	1,298	257	9,188	n/a	543	501
Aged 15–17	74,041	47,435	47,424	5,354	3,997	31,138	n/a	5,154	1,781
Aged 18–20	99,484	70,062	69,662	9,493	21,793	21,918	n/a	14,208	2,250
21 and over	465,374	328,099	327,277	43,005	109,214	85,711	2,004	76,724	10,619
Total	658,566	458,094	456,861	59,241	135,266	148,543	2,004	96,629	15,178

Number of persons proceeded against at magistrates courts, found guilty and sentenced at all courts for standard list offences[1 2]
England and Wales 2003 Sentence breakdown

Sex/age group	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Sentenced*	*Absolute/ conditional discharge*	*Fine*	*Community sentence*	*Fully suspended sentence*	*Immediate custody*	*Otherwise dealt with*
Females									
Aged 10–11	131	87	87	6	—	72	n/a	—	9
Aged 12–14	3,737	2,465	2,465	300	21	1,975	n/a	69	100
Aged 15–17	11,109	7,232	7,233	911	318	5,362	n/a	352	290
Aged 18–20	12,165	8,424	8,410	2,175	2,098	2,870	n/a	966	301
21 and over	74,560	52,539	52,506	12,167	14,973	15,607	587	7,283	1,889
Total	101,702	70,747	70,701	15,559	17,410	25,886	587	8,670	2,589
Total									
Aged 10–11	1,337	798	798	97	5	660	n/a	—	36
Aged 12–14	22,198	14,252	14,252	1,598	278	11,163	n/a	612	601
Aged 15–17	85,150	54,667	54,657	6,265	4,315	36,500	n/a	5,506	2,071
Aged 18–20	111,649	78,486	78,072	11,668	23,891	24,788	n/a	15,174	2,551
21 and over	539,934	380,638	379,783	55,172	124,187	101,318	2,591	84,007	12,508
Total	760,268	528,841	527,562	74,800	152,676	174,429	2,591	105,299	17,767

n/a = Not applicable.

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Standard list offence (all indictable, all triable either way offences and some of the more serious summary offences such as common assault and driving while disqualified or under the influence of drugs or alcohol).

Stansted Hijack

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the Afghans who landed at Stansted on a hijacked plane remain in the UK; and what support they are receiving. [208984]

Mr. Browne: Of those who claimed asylum, 80 remain in the UK. They have been supported under section 111 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which allows grants to voluntary organisations. At present those who are still receiving support are housed in accommodation provided by the refugee arrivals project, which is one of the six voluntary organisations grant funded by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) for the provision of advice and support services for asylum seekers. Some of the Afghans are receiving income support. Those who are not receiving income support are provided with an additional cash allowance funded by NASS to meet their essential living needs.

Violent Crime (Thames Valley)

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about current levels of violent crime in the Thames Valley; and if he will make a statement. [211516]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has had not had any representations about the current level of violent crime in the Thames Valley area. The British Crime Survey which is the most reliable long-term indicator of underlying trends in violence suggests that nationally the levels of violent crime are stable, levelling off after significant falls—36 per cent. since a peak in 1995 and 26 per cent. since 1997. The most recent statistics show that violent crime has continued to fall by 9 per cent. in the year ending September 2004 but this is not statistically significant.

The Government remain committed to tackling violent crime and encourage local crime and disorder reduction partnerships to work together to tackle local problems.

The Thames Valley area has a number of initiatives designed to do just this. Examples include:

In Oxford

A Nightsafe project established to encourage safe drinking including: working with licencees; door staff issues; transport for faster and safer journeys home and other factors facing the night-time economy.

A dedicated Domestic Violence Unit has been established to provide services to victims of domestic violence.

High visibility patrols to tackle robbery in 'hotspot' areas.

Personal safety projects for children.

A bespoke 'Operation Redcard' in the hon. Member's constituency of Witney.

In Slough

A staggered closing scheme reducing the number of people leaving licensed premises at any one time.

More police officers to continue to drive down alcohol-related violence in the town centre.

Operation Crater involves high visibility foot patrols in the High Street on Friday and Saturday nights.

Recent initiatives under Pub Watch have including the winding down of cheap drink promotions, premises holding photographs of people banned for causing trouble, and the expansion of searching at the door of all club-goers for weapons and/or drugs.

CCTV is also being used to identify potential disorder.

In Reading

A one-stop shop has been created to deal with domestic violence, which includes encouraging reporting of hitherto under-reported crimes.

Visa Applications

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if the Senior Director of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate in charge of Managed Migration was aware of Ms Casalme's visa application before 12 May 2003; [203229]

(2) whether the Senior Director of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate in charge of Asylum Support, Casework and Appeals was aware of Ms Casalme's visa application before 12 May 2003; [203230]

(3) whether the Director General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate was aware of Ms Casalme's visa application before 12 May 2003; [203231]

(4) whether the Minister of State for Citizenship and Immigration was aware of Ms Casalme's visa application before 12 May 2003; [203234]

(5) whether the Permanent Secretary of the Department was aware of Ms Casalme's visa application before 12 May 2003; [203235]

(6) on how many occasions members of the Home Secretary's office staff met with *(a)* Mrs Quinn and *(b)* her representatives. [203237]

(7) how many Home Office representatives have met *(a)* Mrs. Quinn and *(b)* her representatives in an official capacity; and what were the (i) reasons for, (ii) times of and (iii) locations of each of these meetings were; [203238]

(8) if he will publish Leoncia Casalme's Home Office documentation file, subject to redaction to ensure Ms Casalme's privacy; [203251]

(9) how many of his Department's officials were aware that Leoncia Casalme's visa application had been read by the Home Secretary or was in some way connected to him; [203252]

(10) for what reason Leoncia Casalme's indefinite leave to remain was granted before the four-year qualifying period had elapsed; [203253]

(11) whether *(a)* the Home Secretary and *(b)* his officials (i) made, (ii) recommended and (iii) suggested changes to Leoncia Casalme's visa application form. [203254];

(12) how the decision to put Leoncia Casalme's application into the fast-track scheme was made; [203255]

(13) if he will list the *(a)* name and *(b)* job title of each Home Office official who worked on the application for indefinite leave to remain made by Miss Leoncia Casalme in 2003; [205337]

(14) whether the Immigration and Nationality Directorate was contacted by officials in his Department concerning the application for indefinite leave to remain by Miss Leoncia Casalme in 2003; [205336]

(15) whether he was informed that his Department was informing applicants for indefinite leave to remain that their applications faced a delay of up to 12 months in April 2003. [205335]

Mr. Charles Clarke Sir Alan Budd was asked to conduct a review of the handling by the Home Office of the application for indefinite leave to remain by Leoncia Casalme in April 2003.

Sir Alan covered the relevant issues in the course of his review.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications were put into the official visa fast-track scheme; [203256]

(2) how long the average wait for a visa has been under the new fast-track scheme; [203257]

(3) when the first visa was awarded under the fast-track scheme to clear the backlog; [203258]

(4) how many indefinite leave to remain visa applicants were told that they would have to wait and were then awarded those visas under his Department's official fast-track scheme to clear the backlog in 2003; [203259]

(5) how many applications for indefinite leave to remain based on the four-year qualifying residency period were eligible for the new fast-track scheme in 2003. [203260]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It had for some time been the practice to decide a significant proportion of applications on initial consideration. On 11 April 2003, prior to the introduction of charging on 1 August 2003, new guidance was issued encouraging caseworkers in Managed Migration to take more decisions at the point of initial consideration.

Between 11 April and 1 August 2003, 80,380 Leave to Remain (LTR) and 28,805 Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) applications (5,770 of which were based on the four-year residency period) were submitted by post. All of these would have been considered under the revised guidance.

For those LTR applications from that period where a decision has been made, the average processing time was 40 days. For those ILR applications from that period where a decision has been made, the average processing time was 50 days.

The target for applications received at the Public Enquiry Office is that they will be concluded on the same day.

Information on how many applicants would have received a notification advising of a possible delay to the processing of their applications is not collated centrally, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The processing time is taken as the period between the date that the application was received in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate until the dispatch date. These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be some data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average processing time for an indefinite leave to remain visa based on the four-year residency requirement period was in the last period for which figures are available. [203261]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The average processing time for cases received by post in the period between August 2003 and November 2004 was 30 days for charged applications and 135 days for non-charged applications.

Applications received in the Public Enquiry Office (PEO) are expected to be completed in the same day. In the same period, 99 per cent. of charged cases and 60 per cent. of non charged cases in PEO were completed in a single day. For the PEO applications not completed on the same day the average processing time was 25 days for charged cases and 110 days for non charged applications.

These figures are based on invalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be some data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many indefinite leave to remain applications have been refused for not fulfilling the four-year residency requirement in each year since 1997, broken down by month. [203262]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Data for each month from 1997 to 2003 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The available data relate to refusals of settlement where the application is premature or inappropriate and will include varying residency requirements.

Refusals of settlement, premature or inappropriate application[1,2], in the United Kingdom, excluding EEA nationals, 1997 to 2003

	Number of decisions
1997	210
1998	220
1999	75
2000	185
2001	210
2002	175
2003[3]	370

[1] These data relate to all refusals of premature or inappropriate applications, not just those not fulfilling the four-year residency requirement.

[2] Excludes dependants of principal applicants, the outcome of appeals and withdrawn applications.

[3] Provisional data.

Note:

Figures rounded to the nearest 5

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many indefinite leave to remain visas on the basis of the four-year residency requirement were granted in total in each year since 1997, broken down by month. [203263]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Grants of settlement for selected categories of grant[1,2], excluding EEA nationals, 1997–2003

	Number of applications granted
1997	9,910
1998	11,230
1999	11,480
2000	15,610
2001	15,255
2002	19,800
2003[3]	29,635

[1] Grants of settlement following four years with a work permit, permit free employment, businessmen, persons of independent means and Commonwealth citizens with a UK born grandparent taking or seeking employment. Includes their spouses and dependants.

[2] Excludes asylum related grants.

[3] Provisional data.

Note:

Figures rounded to nearest 5.

Data for each month from 1997–2003 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many indefinite leave to remain visas have been granted before the end of the four-year residency requirement period in each year since 1997, broken down by month. [203264]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Data of this nature is not collated centrally, and would be available only at disproportionate cost.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* median, *(b)* shortest and *(c)* longest length of time taken to complete the processing of a visa application has been since 1997. [203265]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested on Leave to Remain (LTR) and Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) applications, is set out in the table.

			Days
	Shortest	*Median*	*Longest*
Leave to remain			
2002	Less than 1	35	1,035
2003	Less than 1	15	675
2004	Less than 1	15	335
Indefinite leave to remain			
2002	Less than 1	40	1,045
2003	Less than 1	15	335
2004	Less than 1	25	690

Notes:

1. Comparable data is not available prior to 2002 due to changes in data recording between old and existing databases.
2. The information for 2004 is for the period between 1 January 2004 and 6 December 2004.
3. The processing time is taken as the period between the date on which the application was received and the date on which a decision was dispatched.
4. These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.
5. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long the average visa application took in the latest period for which figures are available. [203266]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is set out in the table.

Mean processing time of leave to remain (LTR) and indefinite leave to remain applications (ILR)

	LTR (days)	*ILR (days)*
2002	85	110
2003	40	60
2004	30	45

Comparable data is not available prior to 2002 due to changes in data recording between old and existing databases. The information for 2004 is for the period between 1 January 2004 and 6 December 2004.

The processing time is taken as the period between the date on which the application was received and the date on which a decision was dispatched.

These figures are based on invalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.

Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many visa applications have been *(a)* made and *(b)* approved in each year since 1997, broken down by month and type of visa. [203267]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The available statistics relate to applications for Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) and Leave to Remain (LTR), and are given as follows. Data for each month could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information on applications made is not published or available for the period requested.

Grants of settlement (Indefinite Leave to Remain) by category of grant, excluding EEA nationals, 1997–2003—United Kingdom

Number of persons

Category of grant	*1997*[1]	*1998*[1]	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[2]
Grants in own right or on a discretionary basis (excluding spouses and dependants)							
On completion of four years:							
In employment with a work permit	2,845	3,155	3,285	4,455	4,335	5,845	9,190
In permit free employment[3]	705	855	700	1,415	890	980	1,325
As business or self employed, or as persons of independent means	265	200	130	260	160	115	230
Commonwealth citizens with a United Kingdom-born grandparent, taking or seeking employment	1,110	1,675	2,240	2,580	3,255	4,060	5,275
British Overseas citizens with special vouchers	220	170	220	160	140	60	[4]—
Refugees and persons given exceptional leave to remain	4,830	6,675	22,505	25,355	17,965	18,235	12,580
of which:							
Recognised refugees[5]	2,405	4,270	22,505	25,355	17,965	10,955	5,265
Persons given exceptional leave to remain	2,425	2,405	—	—	—	7,280	7,310
Other grants on a discretionary basis	2,160	3,700	2,580	6,150	4,190	6,730	11,235
Total granted in own right or on a discretionary basis[6]	12,145	16,435	31,665	40,380	30,935	36,020	39,830
Spouses and dependants							
Husbands:							
Settled on arrival	15	10	15	25	55	45	85
Settled on removal of time limit:	11,240	13,620	15,370	15,730	17,780	16,640	19,495
of which:							
On basis of marriage[7]	10,700	13,010	14,565	14,460	16,850	15,470	17,285
At same time as wife	540	610	805	1,270	930	1,170	2,210
Total husbands	11,260	13,635	15,385	15,755	17,835	16,685	19,580
Wives:							
Settled on arrival	150	125	150	165	240	190	230
Settled on removal of time limit:	20,250	22,165	24,800	30,750	30,745	30,535	37,790
of which:							
On basis of marriage[7]	16,160	18,390	19,945	24,100	26,590	24,930	30,565
At same time as husband	4,090	3,775	4,855	6,655	4,155	5,605	7,225
Total wives	20,400	22,290	24,950	30,920	30,985	30,725	38,020
Children:							
Settled on arrival	1,535	1,430	1,710	1,520	1,730	1,505	1,355
Settled on removal of time limit:	9,985	10,850	17,725	27,485	18,400	19,725	26,065
of which:							
With parent accepted on basis of marriage	1,395	1,615	2,005	3,580	3,830	3,420	4,560
Other	8,590	9,235	15,720	23,900	14,570	16,305	21,505
Total children	11,520	12,280	19,435	29,005	20,130	21,235	27,420
Parents and grandparents joining children or grandchildren:							
On arrival	295	285	265	265	295	215	70
On removal of time limit	885	1,050	815	2,175	1,465	1,530	3,020
Other and unspecified dependants[8]	1,870	3,510	4,380	7,150	6,600	6,940	6,905
Total spouses and dependants	46,230	53,045	65,225	85,265	77,305	77,335	95,020
Claim to right of abode upheld and other grants	350	310	230	295	170	120	130
Category unknown	*	*	*	*	*	2,490	6,510
All grants	58,725	69,790	97,115	125,945	108,410	115,965	141,490

* = not applicable.

[1] Includes a small number of EEA nationals.

[2] Provisional.

[3] Includes ministers of religion, writers and artists. Includes also EC nationals up to 1993, and EEA nationals from 1994 accepted on employment grounds.

[4] Two or less.

[5] Includes persons granted settlement under measures aimed at reducing the pre-July backlog as announced in the White Paper in July 1998. The 1999 figures may be underestimates.

[6] Includes Commonwealth citizens ordinarily resident on 1 January 1973 and for five years.

[7] Includes unmarried partners.

[8] Includes those dependants of port asylum seekers given indefinite leave to enter (since 27 July 1998).

Grants of extensions of leave to remain[1,2] in the United Kingdom by category, excluding EEA nationals, 1997–2003—United Kingdom

Number of grants

Category	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*[3]
All decisions	117,355	103,085	109,040	157,650	189,145	244,400	356,310
Visitors	8,580	9,130	8,440	11,700	13,060	14,060	14,020
Working holidaymakers	265	280	200	210	1,255	2,630	405
Students	52,090	45,100	51,185	70,615	83,180	121,655	184,770
Trainees	8,610	8,180	8,040	8,660	8,160	7,915	10,705
Au Pairs	825	720	400	230	320	195	130
Work permit holders	10,380	12,045	13,775	26,190	43,240	53,170	73,330
Permit free employment[4]	4,930	4,325	4,095	5,460	5,845	6,620	10,305
Independent means	35	35	20	20	20	5	5
Business[5]	270	280	265	1,710	5,270	9,875	24,795
Fiancé(e)s	50	30	35	70	65	75	120
Spouse (probationary period applications)[6]	15,865	15,610	16,285	26,410	23,060	18,500	22,635
Other limited leave	15,455	7,345	6,305	6,360	5,680	8,745	10,810
Category unknown	—	—	—	—	—	960	4,285

[1] Excludes dependants of principal applicants, asylum related decisions, the outcome of appeals and withdrawn applications.

[2] Excludes settlement.

[3] Provisional.

[4] Includes writers and artists.

[5] Includes investors and innovators.

[6] Data include unmarried partners.

Yarl's Wood

Alistair Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions took place between him, the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and Group 4 Amey Immigration Ltd. about the development of policies in respect of high risk detainees prior to the opening of the Yarl's Wood Detention Centre; and if he will make a statement. [206174]

Mr. Browne: There were regular meetings between Immigration and Nationality Directorate officials and Group 4 Amey International Ltd. to discuss operational issues prior to the opening of Yarl's Wood. We were committed to ensuring spaces at Yarl's Wood were used appropriately, and this would include the transfer of immigration detainees from Prison Service establishments who were deemed suitable for this accommodation.

Zimbabwe

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will make a statement on the recommendations made by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees that all removals to Zimbabwe should be suspended; [209611]

(2) what representations he has received on deportations of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe. [209612]

Mr. Browne: We have received over 80 representations, mostly from members of the public, opposing the ending of the temporary suspension of enforced returns of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has based its recommendations on a broad assessment of conditions in Zimbabwe generally. Asylum and human rights decisions are not based on general conditions in a country, they are made case by case according to the risk that the individual applicant would face. Asylum and human rights claims by Zimbabwean nationals are considered on their individual merits in accordance with our obligations under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). As with any other nationality, Zimbabweans who meet the definition of a refugee in the 1951 Convention are granted asylum. If they do not qualify for asylum, but there are other circumstances that make them particularly vulnerable and engage our obligations under the ECHR, they are granted humanitarian protection or discretionary leave. If their application is refused, they have a right of appeal to the independent appellate authorities. In this way we ensure that we provide protection to those Zimbabweans who need it.

Each application is considered against the background of the latest available country information from a wide range of reliable sources including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, other international organisations, non-governmental organisations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the media. Decisions are based on the specific circumstances of the individual concerned. It is clear that there are Zimbabweans in need of international protection, but if an asylum and human rights claim is refused, and any appeal to the independent appellate authorities is unsuccessful, that means that it would be safe for that particular individual to return to Zimbabwe.

Voluntary returns have continued throughout the period that enforced returns were temporarily suspended. There is no evidence to suggest that voluntary returnees or those whose return has been enforced since the suspension was ended have suffered any mistreatment on return.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Anticipatory Self-Defence

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the Government's policy to support the doctrine of anticipatory self-defence in the context of international affairs. [212219]

Mr. Alexander: Article 51 of the UN Charter provides that,

> "Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations".

That right of self-defence is not limited to a response to an actual armed attack. It has been the consistent position of successive United Kingdom Governments over many years that the right of self-defence under international law includes the right to use force where an armed attack is imminent.

Asian Tsunami (Islamic Fundamentalism)

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the impact of the Asian tsunami on levels of Islamic fundamentalism in South East Asia in the *(a)* short term and *(b)* medium to long term; and what plans have been made to discuss this issue with the (i) Thai and (ii) Indonesian Governments. [209151]

Mr. Alexander: The efforts of the British Government in the time since the tsunami occurred on 26 December have been in assisting governments in the area, with other international partners, in the immediate crisis. We have made no assessment of the impact of this on Islamic fundamentalism. We have a good dialogue with the Thai and Indonesian Government on these issues, and will continue to discuss these issues with them.

Asylum Seekers

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it remains the Government's position that the UK retains the right to decide whether to opt in to EU asylum measures, as set out in his oral answer of 16 December 2003, *Official Report*, column 1427, following the European Commission's statement on 24 January on asylum policy. [211878]

Mr. MacShane: Yes.

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the EU embargo on the sale of arms to Burma extends to components that can be used for the manufacture of military equipment. [209768]

Mr. Alexander: Yes. I refer the hon. Member to Council Common Position 2004/423/CFSP.

Paragraph 2 *(a)* of Article 3 prohibits:

> "to grant, sell, supply, or transfer technical assistance, brokering services and other services related to military activities and to the provision, manufacture, maintenance and use of arms and related material of all types, including weapons and ammunition, military vehicles and equipment, paramilitary equipment, and spare parts for the aforementioned, as well as equipment which might be used for internal repression, directly or indirectly to any persons, entity or body in, or for use in Burma/Myanmar."

Chagos Islanders

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a summary of the advice of Government lawyers in the judicial review case concerning the Orders in Council affecting the Chagos islanders. [207769]

Mr. Rammell: The advice requested is subject to legal professional privilege. In any event, this matter remains before the court.

Indonesia

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of whether weapons exported by British companies to Indonesia have been used in internal repression in the last year, with particular reference to the statement made by Colonel Sudarsono relating to the use made of scorpion tanks. [208379]

Mr. Alexander: Our embassy in Jakarta continually assesses whether weapons exported by British companies to Indonesia have been used in breach of human rights. To do this it receives information from a wide range of sources including international agencies, NGOs, other observers, the media and the Indonesian Government. In the last year there have been no confirmed reports that British-built military equipment has been used for internal repression. We follow up all credible allegations on the misuse of British military equipment.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons oil production supplies in Iraq have not been properly metered; and if he will make a statement. [208734]

Mr. Rammell: Installation of oil metering equipment is an important measure to preserve Iraq's oil resources.

Prior to military action in Iraq there were no functioning meters in the Iraqi oil system. At the handover of authority on 28 June 2004 the issue remained outstanding. Currently Iraqi oil exports, either by pipeline to Ceyhan in Turkey or by tanker through the Arabian Gulf, are metered as they pass into the receiving tanks.

The Iraqi Ministry of Oil is responsible for ensuring meters are installed on Iraq's oil wellheads. The Ministry has established a committee to develop and install a metering system for the entire Iraqi oil industry. However a comprehensive system to measure crude oil output is a complex task beginning in the oil fields themselves. This involves conducting a design study that will identify the type of meters and their locations required for measuring crude oil.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government in Iraq that is formed after the 30 January elections will represent the vote in the elections; and if he will make a statement. [208735]

Mr. Rammell: Elections for the 275-member Transitional National Assembly (TNA) were held on 30 January, under the single national constituency proportional representation system. Under the transitional administrative law, the TNA will elect a three person presidency, which will appoint a Prime Minister. The Cabinet recommended by the Prime Minister must be endorsed by the TNA and presidency.

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department is providing to enable UK-resident Iraqis to participate in the forthcoming election in Iraq. [209716]

Mr. Rammell: Out of country voting (OCV) for the Iraqi elections was organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Following consultation with Iraqi groups in the UK, the IOM established polling centres in London, Manchester and Glasgow. The Government do not have a direct role in OCV, although British officials have met regularly with IOM officials in support of the process. So far the IOM has not requested any specific help from the Government.

Lost IT Resources

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what IT resources have *(a)* gone missing and *(b)* been stolen from his Department in the last three years. [210579]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) maintains an inventory of its IT items with the relevant custodians using a barcode system. The records held centrally only record items worth £3,000 or more which meets the threshold for recording FCO assets and meets FCO fixed assets policy and follows government guidelines.

Only custodians hold full inventories detailing all items held by the missions/FCO buildings, including loss and/or theft records. The National Audit Office and Internal Auditors ensure FCO property is properly accounted for by regularly visiting overseas missions. We would therefore need to undertake a global audit of overseas missions and FCO buildings in order to obtain a full list of the items that are either missing or stolen. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Middle East

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Palestinian authorities to establish the whereabouts and fate of missing Israeli service personnel; and if he will make a statement. [201493]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made any representations to the Palestinian Authority regarding missing Israeli service personnel. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has stated that it is in the interests of both Israelis and Palestinians to put an end to the bloodshed and to return to the Roadmap.

With regard to the disappearance of Ron Arad, shot down over Lebanon in 1982, we have not raised this with the Palestinians because we have no reason to believe they have any knowledge of what happened to him. However, the Foreign Secretary discussed Mr. Arad's disappearance with the Iranian Foreign Minister in January 2000. Officials in our Embassies in Beirut and Damascus have also sought information on Mr. Arad's case; most recently with the Lebanese Government in February 2004.

Pakistan

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to authorities in Pakistan regarding their decision to re-instate the death penalty for child offenders; and if he will make a statement. [208615]

Mr. Alexander: In December 2004 the Lahore High Court annulled the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000 which, if implemented, would effectively reinstate the possibility of the death sentence for juvenile offenders in Punjab province of Pakistan. On 17 December 2004 the EU made a demarche to the Pakistan authorities to raise their concerns on this and other human rights concerns. Officials from our high commission in Islamabad have also raised this bilaterally with Pakistani officials. The UK is entirely opposed to the death penalty, which it considers to be a cruel and inhuman punishment, and notes that the imposition of the death penalty on those under 18 at the time of the crime is contrary to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to which Pakistan is a signatory. We hope that steps can be taken by the relevant Pakistani authorities to ensure that the death penalty for juvenile offenders is not reinstated as a result of this recent annulment by the Lahore High Court.

Translation Contracts

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many tenders have been put out for *(a)* translation and *(b)* interpreting contracts for international events hosted by the UK in 2005. [207783]

Mr. Rammell: One call for tender has been issued by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in the Official Journal of the European Union for a contract to provide translation services (approximately 1,200,000 words) for the EU Presidency website. Other smaller-scale translation assignments will be handled by the FCO's in-house translation and interpreting service.

Large-scale interpreting requirements for the UK Presidency of the European Union will be covered by the European Commission's own interpreting service. Smaller-scale interpreting requirements will be administered by the FCO's in-house translation and interpreting service using teams of individual freelance interpreters. No calls for tenders have therefore been issued in respect of contracts for interpreting services.

United Nations

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what requests for assistance he has received from United Nations authorities investigating the provenance of surveillance devices discovered at the Geneva headquarters in December 2004. [208403]

Mr. Rammell: We are not aware of any requests for assistance.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the report of the high level panel on reform of the United Nations. [209063]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister strongly welcomed the report in his statement on 1 December. A copy of the Prime Minister's statement is available on the No. 10 website: www.primeminister.gov.uk/speeches/2004speeches. We believe the report is an impressive contribution to the debate on UN reform. The report sets out a vision for a proactive UN addressing the broad range of threats to the modern world which matches UK priorities. We believe it is particularly important that the report has recognised that sustainable security and sustainable development are linked and cannot be achieved independently.

We will also launch a public debate on the report, which will be published as a command paper.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights about the possibility of a visit to Uzbekistan to study the human rights situation there. [208139]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary had a general discussion with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNCHR), Louise Arbour, shortly after she had taken office last autumn. The specific case of Uzbekistan did not arise in that context.

We are unaware of any plans on the part of the UNCHR to visit Uzbekistan.

The former Deputy UNCHR, Bertrand Ramcharan, visited Uzbekistan in March 2003 as part of an official trip to the five Central Asian states to enhance dialogue and technical cooperation. The visit came also as follow-up to the Secretary-General's visit to the region in October 2002.

In addition, we have told the Uzbeks that we stand ready to assist the Uzbek Government in their efforts to meet the recommendations of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture. We recently received an update on activities implemented under the Uzbek National Action Plan on Torture. We are looking at this latest update with our EU partners to consider how we can work with the Uzbek Government to achieve further progress.

Vietnam

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions he has had with the EU Commissioner for External Affairs on the treatment of Pastor Nguyen Quang in Vietnam; and if he will make a statement; [208396]

(2) what representations he has made to the Vietnam Government about the treatment of Pastor Nguyen Quang; and if he will make a statement; [208397]

(3) what representations he has made to his European counterparts concerning an EU-wide demarche to the Government of Vietnam on the case of the imprisoned human rights activist Pastor Nguyen Hong Quang. [208479]

Mr. Alexander: We and our EU partners regularly discuss human rights issues with the Vietnamese Government. These discussions include religious freedom issues. With EU partners, we raise our concerns in the EU's regular formal human rights dialogue with the Vietnamese Government. We also regularly raise our concerns bilaterally.

The most recent meeting of the EU-Vietnam dialogue on human rights issues was held on 17 December 2004 and was attended by our ambassador in Hanoi. Freedom of religion, restrictions on religious organisations, the situation of protestant groups, and fair trial procedures were among the concerns raised by the EU side. We will continue to press the Vietnamese Government to adhere to its international human rights obligations at every suitable opportunity.

We also participate in regular EU political and human rights working groups in Hanoi. We are aware of Pastor Quang's case and will continue to monitor it with our EU partners.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Admissions Criteria

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will publish his consultation document on post-primary admissions criteria. [211693]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford, Mrs. Iris Robinson on 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 516W.

Departmental Advertising

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in which Muslim newspapers the Department advertises; and what kinds of advertising the Department places in Muslim newspapers. [201701]

Mr. Paul Murphy: There are no Muslim newspapers published in Northern Ireland.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* private finance initiative projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [202517]

Mr. Pearson: We have had no expenditure on *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition new rebuilds or *(c)* PFI projects in the last two years. This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland administration.

Drink-driving

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have received a prison sentence in Northern Ireland having been convicted of a drink-driving offence in the past 12 months. [211521]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Data beyond 2002 is currently not available.

In 2002, of the 2,248 convictions for drink-related driving offences, 12 people were sentenced to immediate custody.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207814]

Mr. Paul Murphy: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs (Mr. Leslie) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what measures are being taken to tackle fuel poverty in Northern Ireland. [211194]

Mr. Spellar: There are a wide range of measures and programmes which both directly and indirectly tackle fuel poverty. The Department's Warm Homes Scheme, winter fuel payments, cold weather payments, the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's (NIHE) heating replacement programme and the Energy Efficiency Advice Centres all provide direct assistance. Other programmes such as the NIHE private sector grants, the NIHE improvement schemes and the Housing Association New Build programme also make a major contribution to tackling fuel poverty.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland are classified as fuel poor. [211195]

Mr. Spellar: Figures on fuel poverty are classified in terms of households rather than individual people. The Northern Ireland House Condition Survey 2001 found that 203,000 households in Northern Ireland (33 per cent.) were classified as fuel poor. An interim house condition survey is due to be published later this year and this will provide more up to date information. It is expected that the numbers will reflect the considerable impact the measures are having in addressing fuel poverty in Northern Ireland.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on tackling fuel poverty in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [211196]

Mr. Spellar: In the period from 1997 to date, there have been a number of schemes implemented to address fuel poverty, such as DEES, Fuel Poverty Pilot Projects, the Warm Homes Scheme, NIE's Energy Efficiency Levy Programme, winter fuel payments and cold weather payments.

Winter fuel payments are paid to everyone over 60 years of age and are not subject to a means test or meeting any fuel poverty criterion.

The level of expenditure in each financial year since 1997 on all such schemes is:

	Expenditure (£)
1997–98	8,245,677
1998–99	8,457,627
1999–2000	28,692,306
2000–01	61,944,434
2001–02	49,693,495
2002–03	54,455,063
2003–04	58,688,905
2004–05[1]	13,719,200

[1] The total spend for winter fuel payments and the ME Energy Efficiency Levy Programme are not yet available for this financial year.

In addition, there is a wide range of measures and programmes which indirectly tackle fuel poverty. For example, Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE) private sector grants, the NIHE improvement schemes and the Housing Association New Build programme. However, it is not possible to identify how much of this specifically addresses fuel poverty.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to set up the interdepartmental group on fuel poverty. [211198]

Mr. Spellar: The interdepartmental group on fuel poverty is currently being set up and it is proposed that the first meeting will be in April 2005.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what categories of homes are eligible for assistance under the Warm Homes Scheme in Northern Ireland. [211199]

Mr. Spellar: It is the circumstances of the individual householder which determines the eligibility for the Warm Homes Scheme. Those who are eligible for assistance are owner-occupiers and private sector tenants who are in receipt of means tested or disability benefits.

Human Rights/Equalities Commissions

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the planned budgets and staffing levels are for the *(a)* Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and *(b)* ECNI in each of the next three financial years. [210938]

Mr. Spellar: The planned budget for the next three years for the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission is:

	£ million
2005–06	1.35
2006–07	1.35
2007–08	1.35

Officials in the devolved administration in Northern Ireland have provided figures for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland:

	£ million
2005–06	6.799
2006–07	6.799
2007–08	6.799

The current staffing levels stand at:

17 for Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission

146 for the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

We are not able to give precise figures for staffing levels over the next three years.

All NDPBs are required to make efficiency savings under Peter Gershon's independent 2004 review on public sector efficiency. The current rate of efficiency savings stands at 2.5 per cent.

Invoices

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of time was between the date of invoices issued to his Department from a supplier and payment by the Department of the invoice in the last 12 months for which figures are available; what percentage of these invoices were paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice; what percentage of these invoices remained unpaid after 90 days; and if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it. [200624]

Mr. Paul Murphy: From April 2003 to March 2004:

the average length of time between the date of invoices issued to the Department from a supplier and payment of the invoice by the Department is 23 days.

the percentage of these invoices paid within 30 days of the date of issue of the invoice was 82.2 per cent.

the percentage of these invoices which remained unpaid after 90 days was 0.5 per cent.

The Government's policy on the payment of invoices issued to it is:

> "all Departments and agencies should pay all invoices not in dispute in 30 days or the agreed contractual terms if otherwise specified and all Departments should aim to pay 100 per cent. of invoices, including disputed invoices once the dispute has been settled, on time in these terms".

Juvenile Justice Centre

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what dates representatives from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission have been refused access to the Juvenile Justice Centre; what the reason was in each case; and what action has been taken as a result. [210941]

Mr. Spellar: The Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission published a full report in March 2002 on the arrangements for children in custody in Northern Ireland. In January 2004, the Commission expressed a wish to undertake another inspection of the only remaining Juvenile Justice Centre at Rathgael, Bangor. As a full-scale inspection of the Centre was already being undertaken in that year by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate (CJI), in order to avoid duplication and the placing of an unnecessary burden on the children and staff in the Centre the Commission was advised that it would not be appropriate for them to carry out another review at that time. However, at the invitation of the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice, an Investigations Officer from the Commission joined the CJI team and played a full part in the inspection.

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the impact of terrorism on the mental health needs of the Province. [205966]

Angela Smith: There has been no definitive research into the impact of terrorism on the mental health needs of the population of Northern Ireland.

Plastic Baton Rounds

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many plastic baton rounds were used in crowd control circumstances in Northern Ireland during 2004 by *(a)* the police and *(b)* the Army. [211816]

Mr. Pearson: No baton rounds were fired in Northern Ireland in 2004. The last firing of a baton round in Northern Ireland was in September 2002.

The Government remains committed to implementing the Independent Commission on policing's recommendations on the use of less lethal weaponry. PSNI is now equipped with a broader range of public order equipment, including water cannon, to provide a graduated response to threatening situations. There is also a UK wide research programme to find an acceptable, effective and potentially less lethal alternative to the baton round.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209580]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) has spent the following on advertising staff vacancies:

(a) 2002–03: £101,429.12

(b) 2003–04: £52,927.61

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven Northern Ireland Departments.

Trolley Waits

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what information he has regarding the number of trolley waits at each of the Province's hospitals in each month over the last five years. [210034]

Angela Smith: This information is not available in the form requested.

The total number of hospital trolley waits is reported to the Department on a quarterly basis and is collected at trust level only. Information relating to the last five financial years is presented in the tables.

Quarter ending	*Royal Group*	*Belfast City*	*UC and HT*	*Down Lisburn*	*Mater*
30 June 1999	269	2,589	3,106	1,067	114
30 September 1999	358	2,680	3,176	1,468	108
31 December 1999	467	3,021	3,239	1,388	166
31 March 2000	1,023	2,961	3,391	1,459	119
30 June 2000	340	2,854	3,625	1,558	129
30 September 2000	359	2,868	3,403	1,355	120
31 December 2000	4,177	3,011	3,634	1,480	99
31 March 2001	792	3,168	3,605	1,524	350
30 June 2001	659	3,096	3,345	1,618	187
30 September 2001	740	3,247	3,352	1,608	352
31 December 2001	695	3,273	3,413	1,676	403
31 March 2002	653	3,287	3,405	1,609	1,920
30 June20 02	623	3,380	3,764	1,734	1,783
30 September 2002	3,201	3,264	3,599	1,948	1,964
31 December 2002	3,029	3,008	3,521	1,964	1,890
31 March 2003	3,209	3,156	3,383	1,777	1796
30 June20 03	3,312	2,975	3,306	1,862	1,697
30 September 2003	3,222	3,040	3,577	1,945	1,766
31 December 2003	3,094	3,234	3,391	1,818	1,913
31 March 2004	3,079	2,914	3,247	1,831	1,865
30 June 2004	2,945	2,736	3,705	1,846	1,948
30 September 2004	2,920	2,760	3,953	1,828	1,995

Quarter ending	*Causeway*	*United*	*Craigavon Area*	*Newry and Mourne*	*Armagh and Dungannon*	*Altnagelvin*	*Sperrin Lakeland*
30 June 1999	100	2,643	1,374	89	440	1,383	820
30 September 1999	100	2,789	1,914	97	364	1,357	758
31 December 1999	100	3,390	2,428	108	10	1,260	839
31 March 2000	100	3,635	2,787	105	39	1,238	886
30 June 2000	100	3,703	2,649	113	54	1,228	943
30 September 2000	162	3,781	2,968	168	47	1,345	907
31 December 2000	137	3,678	3,100	155	10	1,292	962
31 March 2001	170	4,080	3,378	146	8	1,236	908
30 June 2001	193	3,779	3,306	46	8	1,388	866
30 September 2001	203	3,776	3,242	152	4	1,400	900
31 December 2001	172	4,171	3,390	106	4	1,306	935
31 March 2002	259	3,781	3,288	112	—	1,201	892
30 June 2002	154	4,187	3,152	166	—	1,375	929
30 September 2002	97	4,276	3,360	143	—	1,450	1,018
31 December 2002	628	4,360	4,009	136	—	1,509	1,081
31 March 2003	675	4,334	4,240	166	—	1,575	1,369
30 June 2003	704	4,150	4,419	173	—	1,652	1,370
30 September 2003	781	4,212	4,277	128	—	1,759	1,373
31 December 2003	624	4,318	4,639	191	—	1,996	1,206
31 March 2004	618	4,354	4,421	217	—	2,106	1,317
30 June 2004	730	4,505	4,356	182	—	1,941	1,214
30 September 2004	1,236	4,360	4,240	[1]1,040	—	2,008	1,226

[1] Newry and Mourne Trust does not have an electronic Accident and Emergency System and have been providing a two-week snap shot survey in each quarter. From 1 June 2004 additional resources have been allocated and they are now in a position to manually collect all trolley waits.

Note:

In a small number of cases Trusts have returned data for a representative sample of trolley waits.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Courts

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the Lord Chancellor's plans to increase the number of community courts in England; [210050]

(2) what assessment the Department has made of the efficacy of the community court in North Liverpool; how many offences the court has considered, broken down by category; and what sentences were handed down. [210051]

Mr. Leslie: The information is as follows:

1. The Liverpool Community Justice Centre is the only pilot of this type. However, we are looking at other ways of piloting the problem-solving approach within the existing magistrates court system. The first of these will be based within Salford magistrates court.

2. At Liverpool, the community courtroom became operational on 9 December 2004 and it is too early to make an assessment of its efficacy.

The court has been sitting for two days a week since 9 December 2004 and has heard over 100 cases. These include a range of antisocial behaviour type offences and crimes identified as priorities by the community. The court has imposed a wide range of sentences including community penalties and imprisonment and has also ordered the closure of a crack house. These sentences were informed by case management which looked at the problems of each offender and ways of addressing why they commit crime.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205783]

Mr. Leslie: For my Department, the expenditure on IT projects since 1997 is contained within three main areas; Crown and county courts, magistrates courts and headquarters. These three areas are covered by separate contracts, namely LOCCS, the LIBRA contracts and ARAMIS.

LOCCS (Local Office Court Computer Systems—various court-based IT systems):

(a) Expenditure: Between 1997 and 2004, expenditure on LOCCS contract totalled £137.53 million. The expenditure for each year is as follows:

	£ million
1998–99	5.92
1999–2000	14.35
2000–01	24.9
2001–02	33.4
2002–03	17.5
2003–04	41.46

(b) Purpose: LOCCS provides operational IT systems to the Court Service.

(c) and *(d)* Over-runs: there are no over-runs.

ARAMIS (Resource Accounting and Management Information System):

(a) Expenditure: Since 1997 to date, expenditure has totalled £121.25 million. The expenditure for each year is as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	3.07
1998–99	13.54
1999–2000	14.47
2000–01	18.5
2001–02	18.39
2002–03	24.74
2003–04	28.54

(b) Purpose: ARAMIS provides accounting, financial, HR/payroll and management information services to the Department.

(c) and *(d)* Over-runs: there are no over-runs.

The LIBRA contracts

(a) Total expenditure since 2000 (when payments commenced) to date is £180.8 million. The expenditure for each year is as follows.

	£ million
2000–01	11.2
2001–02	22
2002–03	68
2003–04	79.6

(b) Purpose: The Libra contracts provide case management and office automation to magistrates courts. The Libra Project will deliver a standardised IT system into all magistrates courts. Its aim is to provide users with a modern network, office automation and case management software, that will help them improve the way they work and serve their customers. It will also improve links with other agencies, and will include linking with the police through the CJS Exchange.

(c) and *(d)*: 75 per cent. of the project has been delivered ahead of target and to budget (network and office automation). Deployment dates for case management software to be confirmed. Cost implications will be confirmed pending final deployment dates.

Judges' Expenses

Norman Baker: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much has been claimed in expenses by judges in each year since 1997; and what this represents for each year as an average per judge. [210971]

Mr. Leslie: From the information available to my Department, the total judicial expenses claimed since 1997 are:

Financial year	*Total judicial expenses (£)*	*Total number of judges*	*Average expense per judge (£)*
1997–98	164,110	3,121	52.58
1998–99	6,907,726	3,239	2,132.67
1999–2000	8,568,338	3,255	2,632.36
2000–01	8,787,395	3,325	2,642.83
2001–02	10,303,003	3,343	3,081.96
2002–03	13,118,670	3,408	3,849.38
2003–04	14,829,365	3,382	4,384.79
2004–05[1]	10,681,011	3,445	3,100.44

[1] YTD

The practice of coding judicial expenses separately from judicial salaries and fees began in early 1998, therefore accurate reporting was available from 1998–99.

Legal Aid (Travellers)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the estimated cost of legal aid to Travellers has been in each year since 1997. [211918]

Mr. Lammy: I am unable to provide an answer as the Department does not record or hold the information requested.

Supreme Court

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of the costs of the new Supreme Court; and if he will make a statement. [211489]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Member to my written ministerial statement of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 117WS, notifying this House that Middlesex Guildhall was the preferred location for the UK Supreme Court.

Detailed within that statement are the costs associated with the delivery of the Supreme Court and the operational running costs.

DEFENCE

14th Signals Regiment

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to move the 14th Signals Regiment from their base at Cawdor Barracks in the next three years. [211008]

Mr. Caplin: At present we have no plans to move the 14th Signals Regiment (Electronic Warfare) from Cawdor Barracks, Brawdy. I will ensure that the hon. Member is kept informed should our intentions change in the future.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has received representations from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or on his behalf, in connection with the location of the final assembly of the CVFs. [211433]

Mr. Ingram: No.

Aircraft Servicing

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost was of servicing Harrier jets at RAF Cottesmore in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [210932]

Mr. Ingram: The Harrier Integrated Project Team provides logistic support to the entire Harrier Departmental Fleet at a variety of different locations. To collect the information necessary to give an accurate assessment of the value of repair and maintenance work carried out at RAF Cottesmore would be very time consuming and at disproportionate cost.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total value was of work undertaken by BAE Systems at *(a)* RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* RAF Marham in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [210933]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost was of servicing Tornado jets at RAF Marham in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [210934]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions have taken place between his Department and representatives of the British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association; and what response the Department has made to the Association's letter before action. [210688]

Mr. Caplin: There have been no recent discussions between Ministry of Defence and representatives of the British Nuclear Test Veterans Association about common law compensation claims.

A formal letter of claim was however received on 16 December 2004 from solicitors representing individual veterans of the British nuclear test programme in a potential compensation claim against MOD, to which an acknowledgement has been sent. A substantive response is under consideration by MOD officials and their legal representatives.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211654]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not hold records centrally for all redundancy payments and to obtain the Department's expenditure on redundancy for the last seven years would result in disproportionate cost. However I am able to provide figures for the last five years, together with expenditure to 31 December 2004 for the current financial year, for all MOD civilians who are members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (PCSPS) and who have been made redundant on either early retirement or early severance terms. These are as follows:

	£
1999–2000	58,059,213.45
2000–01	44,021,379.73
2001–02	52,909,005.61
2002–03	47,959,121.63
2003–04	83,963,680.79
2004–05	[1]58,954,837.55

[1] Figure covers expenditure to 31 December 2004

The figures for estimated future costs (based on the same criteria as above) are estimated to be:

	£
2005–06	67,000,000
2006–07	50,000,000
2007–08	83,000,000

Civil Service Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205576]

Mr. Caplin: All the Department's property, represented by its fixed assets and stocks, is accounted for using normal accounting conventions, and in accordance with the accounting policies stated in the

Departmental Resource Accounts. These accounts are published annually, and are audited and certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

The Departmental Resource Accounts are available on the MOD Website and copies have been laid in the Library of the House.

Clothing Contracts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the country of origin was of fabric samples tested for the cut and sew contract; and when the tests took place. [212141]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1372W. Tests on the fabric were carried out at independent accredited test houses during November 2004 in China and in the United Kingdom. All tests confirmed that Ministry of Defence specification requirements are being met.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many garments have been delivered by the factory in China for the cut and sew contract. [212142]

Mr. Ingram: The first significant delivery under the cut and sew contract, consisting of 12,900 towels, was satisfactorily made in November 2004. Other deliveries under this contract to date have been 28 Dress Warm Weather (delivered 22 October 2004) and 3,666 Trousers Action Working Dress (delivered 29 November 2004). More recently, on 8 January deliveries of 17,769 undergarments, which meet the required specifications, were received from a Chinese sub-contractor, ahead of the contract schedule.

Cluster Munitions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which *(a)* UK-owned and *(b)* foreign-owned companies have manufactured cluster munitions in the UK since 1998 for use by (i) the armed forces of the United Kingdom, (ii) the armed forces of another country and (iii) others. [200293]

Mr. Ingram: No United Kingdom or foreign-owned company has manufactured air or ground launched cluster munitions in the UK for the armed forces of the UK since 1998. However, BAE Systems undertake fusing and packaging of ground launched cluster munitions to meet current MOD requirements. I am not aware of any UK company manufacturing cluster munitions for export since 1998.

European Security Research Advisory Board

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who the UK representatives will be on the European Security Research Advisory Board. [211255]

Mr. Hoon: Following its Communication "Security Research: the next steps" of 7 September 2004, the European Commission invited member states, along with a number of organisations, to nominate high-level strategists in the field of security-related research for possible membership of the European Security Research Advisory Board. The question is interpreted as relating to nominations made by Her Majesty's Government, as opposed to any British citizens who have been nominated by other parties.

The Government has nominated a number of Government and non-Government candidates, however there is no guarantee that any of these will be selected. At the time of writing, on 26 January 2005, it is not yet known who the Commission have selected for this advisory board.

Falcon Project

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to announce a decision on the successful tenderer for the Falcon project; and if he will make a statement. [212097]

Mr. Ingram: We are still considering how best to provide the Falcon communications system capability and will make an announcement as soon as possible.

Household Division

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what reviews are being carried out of the public duties obligations of the Household Division including the incremental companies. [211491]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence constantly reviews all its military tasks, including public duties.

Infantry Regiments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will reconsider his decision on the naming of the unit formed by the merger of the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, the King's Own Royal Border Regiment and the King's Regiment; and for what reasons the name proposed by the regiments involved was rejected; [212139]

(2) what process was used by his Department to reach a decision on the change of name of the 1st Queen's Lancashire Regiment; and whether the name change was recommended by *(a)* Army staff and *(b)* Ministers. [212143]

Mr. Ingram: The process of restructuring the infantry has been worked through by the Army in consultation with the divisions and regiments concerned. As part of this process, infantry divisions were asked to suggest options for new regimental titles.

The proposed title of the 'King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment' was one of the options put forward by the King's Division, and was selected by the Executive Committee of the Army Board (and subsequently endorsed by the Army Board) on the basis that this title best reflected all the antecedent regiments from which it will be drawn. This was felt to be particularly important because of the fact that this reorganisation involved the merging of three previously distinct regiments, into a two-battalion regiment.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which infantry regiments have had the best record of personnel retention in each year since 2002. [209195]

Mr. Caplin: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* start and *(b)* end dates were of each British Army unit's operational deployment in Iraq since January 2003; and what the (i) dates and (ii) locations of (A) the unit's previous three deployments and (B) subsequent deployments were. [199583]

Mr. Ingram: In view of the voluminous nature of the information requested, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy in the Library of the House.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women are being held in detention by British military authorities in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [203593]

Mr. Ingram: As at 27 January 2005, there were 30 men and no women being held in detention by British military authorities in Iraq.

Mr. Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Government will commission and fund a comprehensive, independent inquiry into the number of Iraqis who have died or been injured as a result of war-related causes since the US/UK invasion of Iraq in March 2003. [210008]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary explained in his written statement on 17 November 2004 *Official Report*, columns 92–95WS, we believe that the Iraqi authorities remain in the best position to monitor the casualties of their nationals. An independent inquiry is highly unlikely to be able to gain better access and provide more accurate information on casualties than the Iraqi Government.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* casualties and *(b)* fatalities of British troops in Iraq there have been since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [210589]

Mr. Ingram: 75 United Kingdom Service Personnel have died while on Op Telic. The UK has conducted 2,891 medical evacuations from Iraq since February 2003. This includes a small number of entitled civilians and Iraqis. Numbers of minor casualties treated in theatre are not held centrally.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list individuals detained in Iraq by UK forces on the basis of an alleged connection with weapons of mass destruction; how long each has been detained; when he expects each to be released; and if he will make a statement. [210657]

Mr. Hoon: No individuals are being interned in Iraq in a United Kingdom detention facility because of an alleged connection with weapons of mass destruction.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the text of the aide-memoire on the law of armed conflict provided to soldiers on active duty in Iraq. [210736]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: Yes.

Kellogg Brown & Root

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list contracts his Department has granted to Kellogg Brown & Root in the last five years. [210997]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has placed the following contracts directly with Kellog Brown & Root since 1 April 1999 to the present date:

Contract Number	*Date Placed*
BFIC1/06	13 December 2002
ESSESLC/0234	8 September 2003
BFIC1/30	29 September 2003
CB/PJHQ/012	4 December 2003
CB/PJHQ/013	5 December 2003
ESSESLC/0318	5 December 2003
BFIC1/08	21 January 2004
CB/PJHQ/017	25 February 2004
CB/PJHQ/031	22 April 2004
CB/PJHQ/032	29 April 2004
CB/PJHQ/035	18 May 2004
CB/PJHQ/036	27 May 2004
CB/PJHQ/037	13 July 2004
ESSESLC/0336	25 August 2004
CB/PJHQ/045	8 September 2004
CB/PJHQ/040	22 September 2004
ESSESLC/0434	19 October 2004
CB/PJHQ/049	27 October 2004
CB/PJHQ/053	9 December 2004

Total value of the contracts is in the region of £132 million. Contract BFIC1/06 covered the supply of the temporary deployable accommodation in support of Operation Telic with contracts with the prefix "ESSESL" providing the logistic support and spares provisioning to support that requirement. Contract CB/PJHQ/053 covered the supply of various personal protective equipment and contract BFIC1/30, and the remainder of contracts with the prefix CB/PHJQ, associated with the CONLOG enabling contract providing a range of logistic and infrastructure support to PJHQ operations worldwide.

Military Court Sentences

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the longest sentence being served by a *(a)* man and *(b)* woman following conviction by a military court is. [210310]

Mr. Caplin: The longest sentence being served by a male following conviction at courts-martial is of detention during Her Majesty's Pleasure. There are no females presently serving a sentence of imprisonment or detention.

Military Discipline

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of HM armed forces were *(a)* disciplined and *(b)* dismissed from the Services for misuse of rail warrants in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [208212]

Mr. Caplin: The number of Service personnel reported as having been disciplined for offences relating to the misuse of rail warrants in each of the last five years is:

	The Naval Service	*The Army*	*The RAF*
2000	0	[1]3	0
2001	0	4	1
2002	0	2	1
2003	0	1	0
2004	0	5	[2]1
Total	0	15	3

[1] One soldier tried in 2000 was subsequently dismissed the Service. All other Service personnel were retained.
[2] on-going

The statistics for the Naval Service refer to trial by courts-martial only. No statistics are held centrally for disposal at summary level for this Service.

Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the *(a)* Regular Army and *(b)* Royal Irish Regiment are serving in Northern Ireland. [211817]

Mr. Ingram: As at 31 December 2004 there were 6,660 members of the Regular Army and 3,280 Home Service members of the Royal Irish Regiment stationed in Northern Ireland.

The GOC NI also has under his command troops that are rear based in Great Britain that can be called forward to the Province as and when required. In addition other troops can be made available to the GOC NI from Land Command if required for example during the marching season.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 16WS on the reduction of Battalion Under Command GOC Northern Ireland, how many troops will remain under the command of the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland following the changes announced in that statement; and if he will make a statement. [212117]

Mr. Ingram: As at the 31 December 2004 the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (GOC NI) had under his command 11490 Armed Forces personnel (Navy, Army and RAF) stationed in Northern Ireland or rear-based in Great Britain. As a result of the change announced in my Written Ministerial statement of 26 January, this number is expected to reduce by some 570 personnel.

The GOC NI continues to keep the number of personnel in Northern Ireland under regular review so as to provide optimum support to the PSNI.

Nuclear Weapons

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the Government's policy is on research and development of new nuclear weapons, with particular reference to low yield and bunker buster weapons and activities carried out within the Mutual Defence Agreement with the United States Administration; and if he will make a statement. [211437]

Mr. Hoon: The Government's approach to future decisions on nuclear weapons policy was set out at paragraph 3.11 of the 2003 Defence White Paper (Cm 6041–1). No research of the kind referred to by the hon. Member is carried out under the Mutual Defence Agreement.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207667]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

QinetiQ

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list those Ministry of Defence projects for which QinetiQ *(a)* has pre-qualified to bid and *(b)* is bidding (i) on its own and (ii) as a full equity partner in a consortium. [211092]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the potential for conflicts of interest to arise where QinetiQ is competing for Ministry of Defence contracts; and if he will make a statement. [211093]

Mr. Ingram: During the QinetiQ Vesting process, the potential for such conflicts of interest was considered. To ensure any such conflicts were properly addressed the Ministry of Defence ownership interest in QinetiQ was kept completely separate from the Department's competitive contract placement activities. Compliance processes were also implemented to ensure the advice QinetiQ provides to MOD is independent of commercial contracts that could give rise to a potential conflict of interest.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether restrictions have been placed on the ability of QinetiQ to compete for service-based Ministry of Defence contracts. [211097]

Mr. Ingram: The only restriction that has been placed on the ability of QinetiQ to compete for the Ministry of Defence contracts is the compliance regime which was put in place when QinetiQ was created in 2001. This regime prevents QinetiQ from entering into commercial relationships which would create an unmanageable conflict of interest and prejudice the company's ability to provide impartial advice to MOD.

Royal Navy Wrecks

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many wrecks of Royal Navy vessels lie in UK waters that have *(a)* not been legally explored, *(b)* been illegally explored and *(c)* been legally explored; and if he will make a statement. [210916]

Mr. Caplin: Unless a RN wreck is specifically designated under the appropriate legislation (e.g. Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, Protection of Wrecks Act 1973), no licence is needed to dive on it.

To date, a total of seventeen RN wrecks have been designated under the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986, of which twelve lie within UK waters. No licences to carry out activities on the designated wrecks have yet been issued.

Further information is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he is taking to prevent historic wrecks of Royal Navy vessels being looted by treasure hunters; and if he will make a statement. [210912]

Mr. Caplin: Under both United Kingdom and international law wrecked military aircraft and vessels remain the property of the state, regardless of their location and condition. Such ships have sovereign immunity from interference and the state may seek enforcement of this in an appropriate court.

The Ministry of Defence uses the Protection of Military Remains Act 1986 to afford protection from unwanted interference to RN vessels wrecked after 4 August 1914, where this is considered necessary and appropriate. To date, seventeen wrecks have been designated under the Act; more will follow as part of a rolling programme.

Historic wrecks, including those of RN vessels, may also be designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. Such designations are however the responsibility of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Devolved Administrations, depending on the individual wreck's location.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will ensure that adequate time is provided for archaeological examination and records of any finds from HMS Sussex before they are sold or otherwise disposed of; and if he will make a statement. [210915]

Mr. Caplin: All items recovered from the site, including those coins that may later be sold, will be fully recorded to appropriate professional standards. Post-fieldwork assessment and analysis will result in the creation of a post-excavation assessment report. The archaeological team may then elect to undertake specific analysis or invite or permit other scholars to do so.

It is too early to speculate on the timing of disposals. Such decisions will eventually be informed by what is recovered. Under the Licence Agreement, the Government, as owner of the wreck and artefacts, retains complete discretion to retain any artefact. A decision on the sale or retention of assets can only be taken with the benefit of far more information on the wreck, its state and contents.

Special Advisers

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many special advisers there are in the Department, broken down by Civil Service pay-grade. [206508]

Mr. Caplin: Details on the names and number of Special Advisers by pay band by department are published on annual basis. For information for the financial year 2003–4, I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 22 July 2004 *Official Report*, column 466W.

Specialist Units

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which specialist units have been deployed on operations since 1997 in a basic infantry role. [211388]

Mr. Ingram: Every soldier in the British Army is trained as infanteer first, and as a specialist second, therefore I have assumed the hon. Member is referring to non-infantry units that have deployed in an infantry role. Such units would not primarily be deployed in an infantry role during war fighting operations. Non-infantry units deployed in an infantry role from January 2000 to January 2005 inclusive are set out in the following tables. Details of deployments before 2000 are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Cyprus

Arm (a)	*Unit (b)*	*Date (c)*	*Comment (d)*
Royal Artillery			
	16th Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2000 to December 2000	—
	12th Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2001 to December 2001	—
	32nd Regiment Royal Artillery	December 2001 to June 2002	(Including a sub unit from the 5th Regiment Royal Artillery)
	16th Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2002 to December 2002	—
	47th Regiment Royal Artillery	December 2002 to June 2003	—
	22nd Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2003 to December 2003	—
	3rd Regiment Royal Horse Artillery	December 2003 to June 2004	—
	40th Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2004 to October 2004	—
	26th Regiment Royal Artillery	October 2004 to April 2005	—
Royal Armoured Corps			
	Light Dragoons	January 2000 to June 2000	—
	Queen's Royal Lancers	January 2001 to June 2001	—

Northern Ireland

Arm *(a)*	*Unit* *(b)*	*Date* *(c)*	*Comment* *(d)*
Royal Artillery			
	26th Regiment Royal Artillery	October 1999 to April 2000	—
	12th Regiment Royal Artillery	April 2000 to October 2000	—
	39th Regiment Royal Artillery	October 2000 to April 2001	—
	39th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2002 to May 2003	—
	4th Regiment Royal Artillery	June 2003 to January 2004	—
	39th Regiment Royal Artillery	August 2003 to November 2003	(Including a sub unit from 5 Regt RA)
	12th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2003 to June 2004	(Including a sub unit from 16 Regt RA)
Royal Armoured Corps			
	King's Royal Hussars	December 2002 to June 2003	—

Iraq

Arm *(a)*	*Unit* *(b)*	*Date* *(c)*	*Comment* *(d)*
Royal Artillery			
	40th Regiment Royal Artillery	July 2003 to November 2003	—
	26th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2003 to May 2004	—
	1st Regiment	May 2004	—
	Royal Horse Artillery	November 2004	—
	4th Regiment Royal Artillery	November 2004	—
Royal Armoured Corps			
	2nd Royal Tank Regiment	June 2003 to November 2003	—
	Queen's Royal Hussars	November 2003 to May 2004	—
	Queen's Royal Lancers	May 2004 to November 2004	—
	Royal Dragoon Guards	November 2004	—

Tornado GR4 (Servicing)

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to service Tornado GR4 jets at RAF Lossiemouth. [210259]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Lossiemouth will continue to undertake Primary and Primary Star maintenance activity for Tornado GR4 aircraft. Minor maintenance tasks for the Tornado GR4 will transfer to RAF Marham as part of the End-End-Study recommendation to centralise Tornado GR4 on-aircraft maintenance.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many tracks are to be built at RAF Lossiemouth to service Tornado GR4 jets. [210260]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what concerns have been expressed to him by BAE Systems about the ability of the RAF to undertake deep repair of Tornado GR4 jets at RAF Marham. [210261]

Mr. Ingram: I am not aware of any such concerns having been expressed to Ministers or senior officials within the Ministry of Defence.

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many tracks are to be built at RAF Marham to provide depth support for Tornado GR4 jets. [210262]

Mr. Ingram: None. The intention is to replace the track based maintenance system with a "flow-line", similar to the Harrier Joint Upgrade and Maintenance Programme at RAF Cottesmore.

VAT

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much VAT was transferred by the Department to the Treasury in 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [211475]

Mr. Ingram: No VAT was transferred by the Department to the Treasury in 2003–04. The total output VAT due to HM Customs and Excise was £93 million (VAT on business sales). However, this was more than offset by the total recoverable input VAT for the year, £1,093 million (recovery of input tax relating to contracted-out services and business activities). This led to an overall VAT refund to the Department of £1,000 million (total recoverable input VAT minus output VAT).

Voluntary Signing Off

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* private soldiers and *(b)* non-commissioned officers have voluntarily signed off from the Army at the 11 year point in their Army career in each six-month period of the last four years. [201489]

Mr. Caplin: Although the term 'signed off' is not recognised within the United Kingdom Armed Forces, it is likely that the question relates to trained soldiers who have left under Premature Voluntary Release (PVR) terms.

The number of PVR exits of trained soldiers with a length of reckonable service equal to 11 years are as follows:

Financial year	*—date of flow*	*Non-commissioned officer*	*Private soldier*	*Total*
2000–01	First half	35	5	40
2000–01	Second half	30	5	35
2001–02	First half	25	5	30
2001–02	Second half	25	[1]—	25
2002–03	First half	15	[1]—	20
2002–03	Second half	10	[1]—	10
2003–04	First half	15	5	20
2003–04	Second half	15	[1]—	15
2004–05	First half	10	0	10

[1] Indicates fewer than 5.

Note:

Totals are rounded to 5.

PVR is defined as all applications and exits from trained personnel which are generated by the individual except "as of right" "compassion", "redundancy", "medical reasons", "death", "services no longer required" and "time expiry".

West Dean

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with the disposal of the West Dean ordnance site; and if he will make a statement. [204546]

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans there are for the future of the land at the Defence Munitions Dean site. [209545]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 15 December 2004]:* The Dean Hill site comprises 340 acres within the site boundary, 230 acres of farmland beyond the boundary wire, and 35 associated residential properties.

The area within the boundary is likely to be sold as one lot on the open market during financial year 2005–06. Following discussions with local authorities, parish councils, Statutory bodies and other stakeholders a Planning Position Statement is likely to be adopted as planning guidance.

The 230 acres of farmland outside the wire has been offered back for sale to former owners under the Crichel Down Rules. Any land not purchased by former owners will be sold on the open market or to the existing farm tenants.

32 of the residential properties have already been sold or are under offer. The remaining properties are likely to be sold at auction. All existing tenants were given the opportunity to purchase the property they occupied and 10 accepted. Seven tenants chose not to purchase and these properties will be transferred to Testway Housing Association subject to their existing tenancies, with a stipulation that the tenancies are protected and provide security of tenure.

Wind Farms

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* guidance and *(b)* objections his Department has sent to Berwick-upon-Tweed borough council about the impact of proposed wind farm sites on the military low flying programme. [210473]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* No specific guidance has been given to Berwick-Upon-Tweed borough council about the impact of wind turbines on military low flying. To date, no objections have been raised by the Ministry of Defence in relation to wind farm planning applications in the borough.

HEALTH

A and E Child Admissions

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many accident and emergency child admissions there were in East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust in each quarter since 31 March 2001. [209005]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Counts of finished in-year admission episodes for emergency admissions via accident and emergency services for patients aged between 0–17

Table 1: Provider—East Sussex Hospitals National Health Service Trust (RXC)

	Finished in-year admissions	
Quarter	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
1—April, May, June	592	779
2—July, August, September	615	778
3—October, November, December	643	787
4—January, February, March	653	777

Table 2: Provider—Eastbourne Hospitals (RDL) and Hastings and Rother (RDM)

Quarter	*Finished in-year admissions 2001–02*
1—April, May, June	677
2—July, August, September	650
3—October, November, December	646
4—January, February, March	637

Notes:

1. East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust (RXC) was formed in 2002–03 by merging Eastbourne Hospitals (RDL) and part of Hastings and Rother (RDM).
2. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (ie the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital episode statistics, Department of Health.

Alzheimer's Disease

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which primary care trusts provide the drug Ebixa for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. [210377]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Memantine hydrochloride (Ebixa) is licensed for treating moderate to severe Alzheimer's disease. In 2003–04, memantine (Ebixa) was dispensed in the community in England in 265 primary care trusts. This treatment is usually provided under the supervision of hospital-based specialists, so community dispensing information does not give a complete picture of national health service use;

Ambulance Services

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many ambulance trusts are proposing to merge with another ambulance trust. [211628]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are aware that Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) is considering options for the future provision of ambulance services in its area. We are not aware of any other SHAs and their constituent organisations formally considering this issue.

Antibiotics

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the consumption of antibiotics in England for medical purposes was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [210843]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of antibiotic items dispensed by prescription in the 12 months to September 2004 was 37 million. Antibiotics are defined as all drugs contained in section 5.1 "Antibacterial drugs" of the British National Formulary.

Average Heights

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average height of an adult *(a)* man and *(b)* woman in England was (i) in 1987, (ii) in 1992, (iii) in 1997 and (iv) on the most recent date for which figures are available. [210674]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Figures for the average height for adults in England are shown in the following table. Figures are not available for 1992.

Mean height by survey year and sex—aged 16 and over with a valid height measurement

	1986–87	*1993*	*1997*	*2003 unweighted*	*2003 weighted*[1]
Height in centimetres					
Men	174.5	174.4	174.5	174.7	175.0
Women	161.7	161.1	160.9	161.2	161.4
Bases					
Men	1160	7380	3744	6042	6605
Women	1163	8428	4462	7449	6923

[1] Data for 2003 has been weighted to reduce bias resulting from non-response to the survey. Weighted data provide the best estimate for 2003. Unweighted data for 2003 is provided for consistency with previous years, which are also unweighted. Data for 1986–87 is for adults aged 16–64 in Great Britain.

Source:

1. The Dietary and Nutritional Survey of British Adults, 1986–87.
2. Health Survey for England, 1993–2003.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205191]

(2) how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205195]

(3) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205199]

(4) how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205202]

(5) what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205205]

(6) what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution. [205209]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All expenditure incurred in the purchase and postage of official Chrismas cards is made in accordance with the Department's guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in "Government Accounting". Recipient lists are co-ordinated to avoid duplication.

Separate figures for postage costs are not available, as some cards will have been included with other correspondence. Those that were not so included were sent using second class post.

Staff numbers and their time spent on separate tasks are not recorded, but the amount in each case would have been minimal.

The available information is shown in the following table.

	Number of official cards purchased	*Cost (£)*
2003	2,250	2,689
2004	2,500	3,480

The cost of each card purchased in 2004, apart from 200 obtained through a separate order, included a donation of 10 pence to the charities listed.

- 2Care
- Action for Blind People
- Age Concern
- Alzheimer's Society
- Amnesty International
- Anthony Nolan Trust
- ARC—Arthritis Research Campaign
- Asthma UK
- Barnardo's
- Blue Cross
- Bodleian Library
- Bone Marrow Research
- Breakthrough Breast Cancer
- British and International Sailors' Society
- British Eye Research Foundation
- British Lung Foundation
- Campaign to Protect Rural England
- Cancer Research UK
- Carers UK
- Centrepoint
- ChildLine
- Combat Stress
- Crossroads Association

Cruse Bereavement Care
Cystic Fibrosis Trust
Epilepsy Action EveryChild
Help the Aged
Iris Fund for Prevention of Blindness
KIDS
Leonard Cheshire
Leukaemia Research Fund
Macmillan Cancer Relief
Marine Conservation Society
Meningitis Trust
Mildmay Mission Hospital
Mind
Motabity
Motor Neurone Disease Association
Multiple Sclerosis Trust
Muscular Dystrophy Campaign
National Autistic Society
National Children's Bureau
National Eczema Society
NCH Action for Children
NSPCC
Oxfam
Plan International UK
Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Queen Elizabeth's Foundation
RNIB
RNID
RNLI
Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund
Royal Mencap Society
Royal Society of Arts
Royal Star and Garter Home
RSPCA
Scope
St. John Ambulance
Talking Newspaper Association
The Children's Trust
The Salvation Army
Tommy's
Tuberous Sclerosis Association
UNICEF
United Response
WaterAid
Winged Fellowship Trust

Clinical Trials

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support the Government provides to small independent drug and vaccine research companies in the preparation of cases for the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency for the registration of clinical trials. [209930]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is the Department's agency responsible for the evaluation of proposals for medicines clinical trials under the legislation introduced in May 2004. It has introduced a number of services to assist companies in the preparation of their case applications. These include:

> Inquiry help lines by phone and e-mail so that prospective applicants could discuss with assessment staff what was needed in their application and how to fill out the forms.
>
> Detailed information published on the MHRA's website including "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers and How to Submit a Clinical Trial Authorisation".
>
> Specimen 'mock' applications for chemical and biotechnology product trial applications.

All of this support is provided promptly and freely for large and small companies alike.

In addition a number of workshops and symposia were organised during the period prior to introduction of new legislation, so that companies could prepare themselves for the changes.

Where more detailed advice and support is needed on scientific or regulatory matters concerning particular clinical trial applications, the MHRA offers face-to-face meetings with its professional assessment staff, followed by written advice. A fee is charged for the scientific advice service.

Counselling

Mr. Soley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research has been carried out by his Department on the relative merits of *(a)* cognitive behavioural therapies (CBT) and *(b)* counselling in general practitioners' practices; what advice he offers on the provision of (i) counselling and (ii) CBT by primary care trusts; and if he will make a statement. [211240]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not undertaken specific research on the relative merits of different psychological therapies in primary care. However, our publication, "Treatment choice in psychological therapies and counselling" (2001), which includes a booklet for general practitioners, sets out the evidence base for a number of psychological therapies including cognitive behavioural therapy and counselling.

In addition, "Organising and delivering psychological therapies" (2004) contains information to support commissioners, providers, service users and researchers wanting to improve the quality and organisation of psychological services including services in primary care.

The National Institute for Clinical Excellence has issued guidance to the national health service in England and Wales on the use of computerised cognitive behavioural therapy for anxiety and depression in 2002 and further review of this appraisal is currently being undertaken.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of his Department's staff is based in London. [208034]

Ms Rosie Winterton: About 60 per cent. of the Department's staff are based in London.

Depression

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the number of people suffering from depression who are not receiving treatment. [210217]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect routine information about people with depression receiving support from family or friends or services in the non-statutory sector. However, the Office for National Statistics' survey, "Psychiatric morbidity among adults living in private households, 2000", shows that 44 per cent. of those assessed as having a depressive episode were receiving treatment under the national health service for mental or emotional problems at the time of interview.

Diabetes Treatment

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prescriptions of analogue drugs for diabetes treatment were made in the last year. [210224]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2003–04, 1.4 million prescription items of analogue drugs used in the treatment of diabetes were dispensed in the community in England.

Doncaster Foundation Hospital

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on the basis of what percentage of Doncaster patients treated Doncaster Foundation Hospital's financial plan was based; and on the basis of what percentage of patients presented to Doncaster Foundation Hospital for hospital treatment the primary care trust is funded. [211582]

Mr. Hutton: This is a matter for the Chair of Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Margaret Cox, Chair, informing her of my hon. Friend's enquiry.

NHS foundation trusts (NHSFTs) are independent from the Department and are directly accountable to their local population and to Parliament. As a result of this independent status and NHSFTs' separate and local route of accountability, under the memorandum of understanding on handling parliamentary business relating to NHSFTs, the Department is no longer in a position to comment on, or provide information about the details of operational management within NHSFTs to Parliament.

East Sussex Hospitals Trust

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the financial deficits in the East Sussex health economy. [208114]

Ms Rosie Winterton: East Sussex health community faces financial challenges, which it has made significant efforts to resolve.

The Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority continues to work with the East Sussex health community to address these challenges, while ensuring that adequate and safe services are delivered to local people.

The health service in East Sussex has benefited from significant additional resources to the national health service. Between 2003–04 and 2005–06, the four primary care trusts in East Sussex will receive an increase of £130 million for health care services.

Evesham Community Hospital

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will place in the Library a copy of the detailed patient environment action teams' results for Evesham Community Hospital for *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003. [204360]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: The reports requested have been placed in the Library. The change in format of the reports between 2003 and 2004 reflects the move to an internet-based reporting system as well as the change in assessment which increased from 18 'areas' to a maximum of 130.

Generic Prescribing

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to his answer of 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1319W, if he will estimate what savings have been made by *(a)* increasing the generic prescribing rate for all practices in England and *(b)* moving at least half of those practices with a generic prescribing rate below 40 per cent. to above that level. [208115]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Specific generic targets were set to maintain the momentum to increase rational and cost-effective prescribing and were achieved in 2002, when the generic prescribing rate across all practices in England reached an average of 72 per cent.

We do not estimate potential savings that might accrue from incremental changes to overall generic prescribing rates or components within the overall rate. However, we estimate that current levels of generic prescribing and dispensing mean that the national health service spends around £750 million a year less than if only branded medicines were prescribed.

GP Development Schemes

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what funds his Department has made available for GP development schemes in each year since 1997–98; [208178]

(2) what funds his Department proposes to make available for GP development schemes in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07. [208179]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested on general practitioner premises developments is shown in the tables.

Table 1 shows spend from primary care trusts audited accounts for the period 1997–98 to 2003–04, the last year for which this information is available.

Table 2 shows the premises element of the primary medical services allocations in 2004–05 and 2005–06, allocations for 2006–07 have yet to be confirmed.

Table 3 shows enabling (start-up) funds allocated for the local improvement finance trust (LIFT) initiatives.

Table 1: General medical service (QMS) premises expenditure (1997–98 to 2003–04)—discretionary and non-discretionary reported spend though statement of fees and allowances reported expenditure (old contract QMS only)

£ million

Spend on QMS premises (England) 1996–97 to 2002–03	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Non discretionary (non cash-limited)							
Notional rents	68.2	75.9	85.6	93.6	87.4	87.7	85.6
Actual rent	18.2	24.7	28.2	18.6	17.3	21	23.5
Actual rent—*health centres (including lease and licence payments only)	18.1	20.7	19.8	37.5	36.1	34.3	38.3
Rates/water/sewage	56.9	63.6	68.1	71.8	72.5	59.3	50
*Health centre rates/water/sewage	7.1	8.1	7.1	5.7	6.3	4.3	5.4
On-going rental on vacated premises, SFA para 55	—	0.1	4.0	0.0	0	0.7	0.1
Non discretionary premises total	168.5	193.1	212.8	227.2	219.6	207.3	202.9
Discretionary (cash-limited)							
Cost—rents and local authority economic rents	96.3	98.2	88.9	85.6	65.1	56.1	43.2
Improvement grants	20.3	22.2	16.9	16,9	14.2	13.5	17.5
Improvement grants *(for health centres)	7.1	5.6	2.9	4.5	3.6	5.1	7.9
Grants to surrender leases on poor premises under SFA para 55	—	0.2	0.0	0.0	0	0.3	0.3
Discretionary premises total	123.7	126.2	108.7	107.0	82.9	75.0	68.9

Notes:

(i) Non discretionary: -non cash-limited. Please note that from 1997–98, actual rents were split to additionally show introduction of health centre rents incurred. Health centre rates were created in 1997–98 to identify costs incurred.

(ii) Discretionary -cash limited. Again with the introduction of monitoring health centre spend from 1997–98—Improvement grants have been split to separately identify health centre spend.

(iii) Please note that 2002–03 and 2003–04 information is based on final HFR/PFR discretionary and non-discretionary summarised accounts outturn.

(iv) Data from 1996 onwards is based on health authority (HA) returns. For 2002–03, data is split between 28 strategic health authority (SHA) quarter 1–2 reporting and 303 primary care trust (PCT) quarter 3 and 4 combined returns, owing to PCTs not having non-discretionary banking rights up until September 2003.

(v) Data on personal medical service (PMS) premises spend is not collected centrally.

(vi) Decreases in all premises spend in 2002–03 and fluctuations in 2003–04 are due to the impact on GP transfers from QMS to PMS and increased waves 1–4b PMS pilots going live.

(vi) Decreases in all premises spend in 2002–03 and fluctuations in 2003–04 are due to the impact on GP transfers from QMS to PMS and increased waves 1–4b PMS pilots going live.

(vii) Please note that all figures up to 2001–01 are cash based. Due to changes in Government accounting regulations, figures for 2002–03 onwards are now be resource based.

(viii) Data on premises spend under new QMS contract arrangements is not currently available.

Table 2: Premises allocations under the new primary care contracting arrangements

£ million

	Premises element of primary medical services allocations to PCTs	*Growth funding allocated to a lead PCT in each SHA area*	*Additional investment*
2004–05	329.399	15	42
2005–06	368.613	83	66
2006–07	To be confirmed	To be confirmed	Not applicable

Table 3: Allocated enabling funds for LIFT initiatives

	Funding (£ million)
1997–98	0
1998–99	0
1999–2000	0
2000–01	1.460
2001–02	0.350
2002–03	27.737
2003–04	105.313
2004–05	43.001
2005–06	Not yet decided
2006–07	Not yet decided

Healthy Eating in Schools

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on healthy eating in schools. [210573]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Nutrition is a key component of a healthy start in life and schools, alongside parents and carers, have a role in shaping the habits and eating behaviours of children. As set out in the Government White Paper, "Choosing Health: Making healthier choices easier", we want to see all schools deliver clear and consistent messages about nutrition and healthy eating, provide opportunities to learn about diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene, good preparation and cooking as well as where food comes from and actively promote healthy food as part of an enjoyable balanced diet. This message is supported by a number of activities and White Paper commitments regarding nutrition in schools, including:

> Funding of £77 million is being provided over 2004–06 to enable over two million children (all four to six-year-old children in local education authority- maintained infant, primary and special schools throughout England) to receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable every school day.
>
> The Government aim is that half of all schools will be part of the healthy schools programme by 2006, with the rest working towards healthy school status by 2009. From April 2005, a healthy school will provide a supportive environment, including policies on healthy and nutritious food.

Revising both primary and secondary school meal standards to reduce consumption of fat, salt and sugar and increase consumption of fruit and vegetables. We will strongly consider introducing nutrient based standards.

Subject to legislation, extending the new standards to cover food across the school day, including vending machines and tuck shops.

Supporting schools to provide the best meal service possible—through guidance on food procurement for heads and governors and improving training for school meal providers.

Ofsted inspectors will be looking at healthy eating in schools and will take into account any school meals provided in doing so.

A comprehensive "Food in Schools" package to provide guidance and resources for implementing the whole school approach to healthy eating and drinking.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has conducted a study into the impact of the introduction of identity cards on his Department's business. [209624]

Mr. Hutton: As with other Government Departments, this Department has been working closely with the Home Office to identify where the identity cards scheme will provide benefits to its business areas. This work is continuing.

Imported Foodstuffs

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what policies his Department has to ensure the safety of imported foodstuffs; and what guidance his Department has given to *(a)* other Government Departments and *(b)* associated public bodies on dealing with these matters. [210490]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am advised by the Food Standards Agency, which has responsibility for food safety matters, that the regulatory controls in respect of imports from non-European Union countries are comprehensive, and for the most part are EU based and operate EU wide. Controls for the import of products not of animal origin will be EU harmonised from January 2006.

Imported food from non-EU countries is subject to checks at ports of entry by local authorities under imported food legislation. Also, food products, whether from outside or within the EU, are subject to the same checks by local authorities as United Kingdom produced food.

The Agency works closely with a number of other Government departments on imported food enforcement matters. Statutory guidance on imported food was issued by the Agency to local authorities in June 2004. A copy of the guidance "Guidance for local authorities in Great Britain on imported food and feed" controls has been placed in the Library.

Infection Control

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training on infection control is available for NHS staff working in *(a)* community and *(b)* primary care settings. [207619]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 10 January 2005]*: Specific training programmes will be determined and implemented locally according to the requirements of the staff and the local area. This information is not collected centrally but recommendations on training are included in the guidelines on Prevention of healthcare—associated infections in primary and community care produced by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence.

In addition, all staff covered by Agenda for Change will receive infection control training. This will cover over one million staff and incorporate nurses, porters, cleaners and healthcare assistants working in all healthcare settings, including primary and community care.

Medical Students

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he is taking to encourage undergraduate medical students to choose placements in rural areas; [211545]

(2) what plans he has to commission research into the merits of placements in rural areas for undergraduate medical students; [211546]

(3) what proportion of undergraduate medical students chose placements in *(a)* urban and *(b)* rural areas, for the most recent period for which figures are available. [211547]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not provide direction on the content of undergraduate medical courses, as higher education institutions (HEIs) are autonomous bodies. Individual medical schools determine their own curriculum in the light of recommendations from the General Medical Council's (GMC's) education committee.

Medical schools organise practice placements for medical students through strategic health authority workforce directorates in a variety of hospital, community and primary care settings.

We do not hold data on practice placements and have no plans to commission specific research. However, we do share a commitment with the GMC, the Council of Heads of Medical Schools and other relevant bodies that all health professionals are trained so that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality health service to all groups of the population with whom they deal. I am aware of the British Medical Association's recent publication, "Healthcare in a rural setting", which recommends a greater accent on placements in such settings. I will draw this report to the attention of the relevant bodies.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) for what percentage of people with multiple sclerosis the timeframe laid down in the National Institute for Clinical Excellence Clinical Guidelines for the Management of Multiple Sclerosis (MS) of 12 weeks between general practitioner referral and completion of investigations was met in the last period for which figures are available; [208843]

(2) what the average waiting time for an NHS patient suspected of having multiple sclerosis from referral by their general practitioner to completion of tests was in the last period for which figures are available; [208844]

(3) how many people were investigated for a possible diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in each of the last five years; [208847]

(4) how many people were diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in each of the last five years. [208848]

Dr. Ladyman: Although the Department does not routinely collect information on the number of people diagnosed with a specific condition, the MS Society estimates that there are approximately 85,000 people in the United Kingdom with multiple sclerosis.

Data on the number of people investigated for a possible diagnosis of multiple sclerosis are not available. However, figures are available on the number of finished consultant episodes with a primary diagnosis of multiple sclerosis for the years 1999–2000 to 2002–03 and are shown in the table. A finished consultant episode relates to in-patients who have completed their period of care and have been discharged, transferred to another hospital or consultant specialist or died. A patient can therefore have more than one finished consultant episode.

Counts of finished in-year admission episodes for primary diagnosis multiple sclerosis (ICD10G35)

	Finished in-year admissions
1999–2000	14,853
2000–01	14,772
2001–02	14,363
2002–03	14,384
2003–04	15,098

Source:
Hospital episode statistics.

Information on waiting times for in-patient and out-patient treatment in England is collected by consultant speciality rather than for specific conditions. Specialty level data for neurology would include various conditions, as well as multiple sclerosis, therefore it is not possible to determine the waiting times for multiple sclerosis.

NHS Cleaning Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1481W, on NHS cleaning services, which organisations are responsible for cleaning hospitals where that service has been outsourced. [211081]

Mr. Hutton [*holding answer 26 January 2005*]: The following is a list of companies providing cleaning services to national health service hospitals. This list is based on patient environment action team reports for the period ending May 2004 and may therefore have changed. The list excludes NHS trusts that provide cleaning services to other trusts.

Calber
Carillion
Catch 22
Durham County Council
Ecovert FM
Edward Clarke
Europa
Executive Hospital Services
Grosvenor Facilities Management
Grosvenor House Group Rotheram Ltd
GSL
Haden Building Management Ltd
Initial Hospital Services
Interserve
ISS Mediclean
Maclellan International
Medirest
Minster Cleaning Services
Mitie Cleaning Services
Norfolk County Services
OCS
Robertsons
Ryhurst
Serco Services
Sodexho
Sovereign Health
Support Services Partnership
Target

NHS Pension Scheme

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in changing the pension arrangements for NHS consultants. [210090]

Mr. Hutton: The National Health Service Pensions Agency for England and Wales wrote to NHS employers on 23 April 2004 to clarify administrative arrangements for the new contract for consultants. The arrangements will ensure pension benefits are protected for all consultants who move to the new contract.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made with the proposal to change the NHS pension scheme from a final salary scheme to an average pay scheme. [210091]

Mr. Hutton: The Government have made no proposals to change the existing pension assessment arrangements for scheme members whose pensions are currently assessed on a final salary basis. The NHS Confederation consultation document on the review of the national health service pensions scheme, produced jointly with the NHS staff side, seeks views on the merits of final salary and career average assessment but makes no recommendation. The Government will consider the responses to the consultation when complete.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff are members of the NHS pension scheme. [210092]

Mr. Hutton: At 5 January 2005, some 1,254,038 people were contributing to the national health service pension scheme in England and Wales.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current value of the NHS staff pension fund is. [210093]

Mr. Hutton: The national health service pension scheme is an unfunded scheme and there is no fund value.

NHS University

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost has been of the National Health Service University since its inception. [211262]

Mr. Hutton: We established the NHSU special health authority on 1 December 2003. Its audited accounts for the period 1 December 2003 to 31 March 2004 show expenditure of £13.3 million. The budget for the full financial year 2004–05 is £44.6 million. Actual expenditure in 2004–05 will only be determined once the financial year has been completed.

Obesity

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to raise awareness of issues relating to obesity. [210491]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government are committed to halting the rise in childhood obesity and have outlined their strategy for doing so in "Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier". This includes a new cross-Government campaign to raise awareness of the health risks of obesity and the steps people can take through diet and physical activity to prevent obesity. We have already taken a number of steps to increase awareness of issues relating to obesity during the "Choosing Health" consultation last year, including staging a conference on obesity and publishing separate consultation papers, "Choosing a Better Diet" and "Choosing Activity". Ministers and senior officials have presented at a wide range of conferences and seminars on obesity throughout the year and continue to do so.

This builds on the five-a-day programme, which includes a number of initiatives to inform consumers of the benefits of eating a variety of at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day as part of a healthy balanced diet, which can help to maintain a healthy weight. Last summer, Sport England also piloted a social marketing campaign to increase exercise in the north east of England. The "Everyday Sport" campaign focused on opportunities for people to include more physical activity in their daily routine and will contribute to the evidence base for an obesity awareness campaign. The Department also funds a range of non-governmental organisations to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy diet and active lifestyles.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the levels of obesity were in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* the London borough of Havering, *(c)* Greater London, *(d)* Essex and *(e)* England at the most recent date for which figures are available. [210496]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The available information is shown in the table. The figures are taken from the Health Survey for England for 2003, the latest year for which figures are available. No figures are available for Romford, the London borough of Havering or Essex.

Percentage of adult population who are obese
(body mass index over 30)
Age 16 and over with a valid BMI (kg/m[1]) measurement

	Men	Women
London[2]	17.6	20.1
England	22.2	23.0
Bases		
London	930	876
England	6,519	6,570

[1] Figures weighted to reduce bias from non-response to the survey.
[2] Figures are for the Government office region for London.
Source:
Health Survey for England 2003

Orthodontists (North-east)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many consultant orthodontists are employed in *(a)* Sunderland Royal Hospital, *(b)* Durham University Hospital and *(c)* Hartlepool University Hospital. [210140]

Mr. Hutton: The enquiry relating to Sunderland Royal Hospital is a matter for the Chair of City Hospitals Sunderland National Health Service Foundation Trust. I have written to Mr. David Graham, chair, informing him of my hon. Friend's inquiry.

Information requested on Durham University Hospital and Hartlepool University Hospital is shown in the table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services dental staff with a specialty in orthodontics by specified trust
Numbers (headcount)

	County Durham and Darlington Acute RXP Hospitals HNS Trust	*North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust RVW*
September 2003		
All staff	*1*	*2*
of which:		0
consultant	0	0
June 2004		
All staff	n/a	0
Of which:		
Consultant	n/a	0

Note:
N/a = not available. This is due to data for June 2004, being taken from the mini census, which collected consultants only.
Source:
Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Paddington Health Campus

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* terms of the leasehold acquisition of land by his Department from the Paddington Development Corporation Ltd. for the Paddington Health Campus are. [210775]

Mr. Hutton: Ahead of formal signature, the costs and terms of the proposed leasehold acquisition of land owned by Paddington Development Corporation Limited for the Paddington Health Campus are commercially sensitive. Details are in the outline business case, which is awaiting approval. Once approved, that information not subject to confidentiality restrictions will be publicly available within one month of that date.

Patient and Public Involvement Forums

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to abolish Patient and Public Involvement Forums of primary care trusts. [211768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has no plans to abolish the patients' forums of primary care trusts.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding has been made available to each primary care trust in each year since 2000; and what the average level of funding was in each year. [211090]

Mr. Hutton: Revenue allocations to 304 primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced on 11 December 2002. This was the first time revenue allocations were made directly from the Department to PCTs. Prior to this, allocations were made to health authorities and health authorities allocated funding to local PCTs.

Information on revenue allocations to each PCT for 2003–04 to 2005–06 has been placed in the Library.

Prime Service Providers

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many prime service providers are employed by the NHS. [209249]

Mr. Hutton: There are 155 prime service providers involved with Departmental programmes and the National Health Service Purchasing and Supply Agency national framework agreements. These national framework agreements are not mandatory; therefore, some NHS trusts buy services and equipment from other sources.

Private Sector NHS Operations

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of NHS surgery he expects to be carried out by the private sector by 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [210673]

Mr. Hutton: The NHS Improvement Plan set the aim that independent sector providers will increase their contribution to the care of national health service patients. The plan said:

> "We anticipate that, by 2008, the independent sector will carry out up to 15 per cent. of procedures per annum for NHS patients, paid for by the NHS."

Private Sector Treatment Units

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the new private sector treatment units are paid for *(a)* the number of operations contracted for and *(b)* the number of operations carried out; and what the costs of the same operations in foundation hospitals is. [211088]

Mr. Hutton: Wave 1 independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) are paid according to the contracted payment mechanism based on a price per procedure. The National Health Service is obliged to ensure they make the number of contracted referrals and providers are paid on a per completed procedure basis. Payment mechanisms for future waves of ISTCs are yet to be determined.

In 2003–04, it is estimated that procedures purchased under the IS-TC programme cost 9 per cent. more than the NHS equivalent cost, using NHS tariff as the base. However, this analysis makes no reference to the commercial terms achieved and additional costs faced by independent sector providers such as the costs of complying with the additionality policy, requiring them to recruit staff in addition to existing NHS staff.

Under payment by results, foundation trusts will receive the national tariff price based on average cost of a healthcare resource group. In addition, they will receive an allocation in respect of market forces factors.

Psychiatric Hostels (Killings)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many members of staff have been killed by patients in psychiatric hostels in each of the last three years. [209922]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Health and Safety Executive collects information on work-related deaths and injuries under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, 1995. In the past three years, there has been one death of a national health service member of staff at a psychiatric hospital.

The NHS Security Management Service, a special health authority with a remit including tackling violence against NHS staff and professionals, has introduced a range of measures to deal with violence, including a national reporting system for physical assaults against NHS staff and professionals. From summer 2005, information on physical assaults and deaths of NHS staff will therefore be collected within the NHS.

Saneline

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's funding for Saneline has been in each year since its inception. [208491]

Ms Winterton: The Department has provided £3,629,050 in funding to Saneline and its projects since it began in 1991. The funding to Saneline, broken down by years, is:

	£
Paid over 1991–92 to 1993–94	150,000
Paid in 1993–94	75,000
Paid over 1994–95 to 1998–99	575,000
Paid over 1998–99 to 2000–01	88,050
Paid over 1999–2000 to 2001–02	120,000
Paid in 1999–2000	300,000
Paid in 2001–02	250,000
Paid over 2001–02 to 2002–03	71,000
Paid in 2003–04	1,000,000
Paid in 2004–05	250,000
Currently being processed in 2004–05	750,000

Small/Medium-sized Enterprises

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts were awarded by *(a)* the

Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible to small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2001–02; and what the total value of those contracts was in each year. [207009]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not hold centrally a record of individual contracts, nor does it have similar details for its agencies. Such details could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The National Health Service Purchasing and Supply Agency, (NHS PASA), an executive agency of the Department, carries out national contracts on behalf of the NHS in England. The number and value of the contracts awarded to small and medium enterprises since 2001–02 are shown in the following table. These contracts are not mandatory and some NHS trusts buy from other sources not included in these figures.

	Number of contracts	*Total value (£)*
2001–02	559	254,824,767
2002–03	413	156,961,430
2003–04	1,365	4,143,741,018

Trans Fats

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will *(a)* ban the use of partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats) in foodstuffs and *(b)* seek to legislate to ensure that all food products containing trans fats are clearly labelled with the content. [210428]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Consumption of trans-unsaturated fatty acids (TFAs) has declined in the United Kingdom and is now below levels that have been shown to be associated with cardiovascular disease.

Nevertheless, the Government will identify opportunities to further reduce TFAs levels as part of the commitment made in the White Paper, "Choosing Health", to work with industry to reduce fat levels in food.

The Government are pressing for the labelling of TFAs in foods at European Union level.

Vacancy Statistics

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209579]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department spent £345,229 in 2002–03 and an estimated £146,331 in 2003–04 on advertising vacant posts.

These figures do not include the Department's agencies.

Whittington Hospital

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the latest information is that he has concerning the completion of the Jarvis private finance initiative contract at the Whittington hospital; and if he will make a statement. [210768]

Mr. Hutton: Under the principles of the private finance initiative, there are strong incentives for the private sector to complete the project. The Department is aware that discussions are ongoing between the trust and the private sector consortium about bringing the project to completion.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 1 February 2005

TREASURY

Alexandra House

Mr. Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has for the Inland Revenue office at Alexandra House, Salisbury, when the lease on the building is terminated; and if he will make a statement. [213110]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue are minor occupier to the Department for Constitutional Affairs. As major occupiers the Department for Constitutional Affairs have served notice to the Inland Revenue to vacate the property at the end of March 2006—this is in line with the terms of their legal agreement.

All possible options for relocation are being explored—as yet no decisions have been made.

Child-rearing Costs

Tim Loughton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate the Government have made of the cost of raising a child to the age of 18 at 2003–04 prices. [211700]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have not estimated the cost of raising a child. Since 1997 the Government have radically reformed the way they provide support to families with children, driven by two principal objectives:

- to support all families with children, recognising that families with children face additional costs; and
- to deliver progress on its goal to eradicate child poverty, by offering greatest support to those most in need, while maintaining incentives to work.

From April 2005, this new system of financial support for families will deliver, through child benefit and child tax credit, a range of support from £17.00 to around £60 a week, compared to a range of £11.05 and £28 a week in 1997.

Corporation Tax (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in the Greater London area have benefited from lower rates of corporation tax. [213385]

Dawn Primarolo: Nationally nearly 600,000 companies have a corporation tax liability each year. All will benefit from the cuts in the main, small and starting companies' rates of corporation tax that have been introduced in recent years. However, it is not possible to identify precisely those businesses that trade in specific areas such as Greater London.

Correspondence

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Paymaster General will respond to the letter from the hon. Member for Southwark, North and Bermondsey, dated 1 December 2004 on City Academies and VAT; and what the reasons are for the delay. [213171]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Disadvantaged Area Relief

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the reasons for the rise in the cost of disadvantaged area relief from 2003–04 to 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [213181]

Mr. Timms: The published cost of Disadvantaged Areas Relief (DAR) is an estimate of the amount of relief claimed by taxpayers. It includes the likely effect of substitution of DAR for other Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) reliefs (such as Group Relief) and the claiming of DAR for transactions undertaken in earlier years.

Football Supporters Trusts

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made by the Inland Revenue in its discussions with Supporters Direct to provide guidance and dedicated support for Football Supporters' Trusts to set up charities or community amateur sports clubs to run their community activities, and to help them take advantage of the range of tax reliefs available to such bodies; and if he will make a statement. [213293]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue has developed a draft package of guidance and support for Football Supporters Trusts. They have approached Supporters Direct and discussed this package and other issues with them, following up action points as well as agreeing to facilitate contact between Supporters Direct and the Charity Commission. The Revenue will continue to work closely with Supporters Direct to deliver the right support, in the right way, for Football Supporters' Trusts.

Housing

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individual dwellings there are in Southend-on-Sea; and if he will make a statement. [213195]

Dawn Primarolo: As at 27 January 2005, there were 76,147 domestic dwellings in the Southend-on-Sea Billing Authority that have a council tax band placed upon them.

Private Finance Initiative

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the amount of public funding required to finance private public partnership schemes *(a)* in each of the past seven years and *(b)* which are repayable in each of the next 15 years. [211713]

Mr. Boateng: Estimated payments under PFI contracts in each of the past seven years and the next 15 years is publicly available information. This data can be found in previous Budget publications (available online at www.hm- treasury.gov.uk) and in my written minsterial statement of 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 43–4WS.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will commission a study into the viability of an excess profits levy on the profits made by banks, financiers and contractors on private finance initiative and public private partnership contracts. [211567]

Mr. Boateng: The Government are committed to achieving value for money from its PFI programme and keeps all aspects of the programme under review to ensure that this objective is being met. The Government have made clear that PFI should only be used where it is the appropriate to do so and where a full value for money analysis shows that it offers the best value for money in comparison with alternative procurement routes. This value for money analysis and robust competition in the bidding process, both of which were highlighted as key factors in the decision to use PFI in the value for money guidance issued by the Treasury last summer, ensure that the public sector pays a fair price for the services it receives from PFI projects and for the risks which the private sector bears.

There are no plans to commission a study into the viability of a special or additional levy on PFI and PPP contracts.

Public Sector Pensions

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of the report by the Government Actuary's Department on the long-term cost of public sector pensions referred to on page 43, Box 4.2 of the long-term public finance report of December 2004. [212010]

Mr. Timms: This report will be placed in the Library by 22 February, together with a commentary which will explain the assumptions and techniques employed in compiling the report.

Taskforces

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204713]

Mr. Timms: The costs are set out in the table.

£000

	1996–97	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Private Finance Taskforce (also referred to as the Treasury Taskforce)	—	637	1,825	1,825	1,730	—	—	—
Partnerships UK: revenue costs	—	—	—	1,000	8,091	920	1,365	3,399
Partnerships UK: capital costs	—	—	—	—	20,050	—	—	—
Financial Action Taskforce	—	2	44	30	—	34	—	25
Equitable Life Inquiry	—	—	—	—	—	72	1,139	277
Diana Memorial Committee	—	—	33	—	—	—	—	—

The Partnerships UK capital costs are the costs of the Treasury's holdings of £4.45 million of ordinary shares and £15.6 million of 6 per cent. loan stock.

The table excludes costs of the taskforces on Credit Unions, Modern Apprenticeships and Social Investment, which are not separately recorded.

Tax Credits

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are claiming working tax credit in each constituency in Northern Ireland. [211523]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits in each constituency in Northern Ireland appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004". This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Tax Returns

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers in Northern Ireland failed to meet the 31 January 2004 deadline for return of Inland Revenue tax returns. [211891]

Dawn Primarolo: Information broken down by regions is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Nationally 8,581,000 returns were received by the filing deadline out of an expected 9,474,000. This represents 90.6 per cent.

VAT (Schools and Colleges)

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will equalise the rates of value added tax paid by colleges of further education with the rates paid by schools. [213068]

Dawn Primarolo: The rate of VAT on goods and services bought by schools and Further Education Colleges (FECs) is generally the same. However, FECs can in certain circumstances benefit from the zero rate for the construction of new buildings.

VAT incurred by FECs and schools is included in the funding they receive from central Government. In the case of FECs this is through their block grant funding, in the case of schools it is through the local government VAT funding mechanism.

There are no plans to change the VAT treatment of schools and FECs.

TRANSPORT

Railway Stations

13. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many railway stations have *(a)* opened and *(b)* been re-opened since 1 May 1997. [211851]

Charlotte Atkins: Since 1 May 1997 12 new stations have opened and 16 stations have re-opened.

Road Building (Essex)

15. **Mr. Burns:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on proposed new major road building in Essex. [211853]

Mr. Jamieson: We have recently announced the programme of major transport schemes which we propose to take forward in the East of England, including schemes on both the strategic and local road networks. A number of these schemes will benefit Essex.

Nottingham Express Transit

16. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the development of the Nottingham Express Transit (NET) in Greater Nottingham. [211854]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has received a bid for the extensions and is working closely with the scheme's promoters on the procurement and financing aspects. Once the Department has considered fully all of the necessary information a decision on whether to provide approval in principle for the extensions will be made based on value for money, the wider benefits and affordability.

M6

17. **Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for increasing the capacity of the M6 motorway between junctions 11 and 20. [211855]

Mr. Jamieson: I launched a public consultation in July 2004 on an Expressway concept as an alternative to widening the M6 between junction 11a and 19. This consultation closed on 21 October. The responses are currently being analysed. When this is complete I will publish my response.

Midland Mainline

18. **Mr. Reed:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to improve rail services on the Midland Mainline route. [211856]

Charlotte Atkins: The Midland Main Line/East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy recently published by the Strategic Rail Authority will be used to inform the Invitations to Tender for the new Thameslink/GN and Midland Mainline franchise. Bids for the franchises will be require commitments on performance, train and crew reliability and operational viability.

Gatwick Express

19. **Laura Moffatt:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact the Strategic Rail Authority's proposals for the Gatwick Express will have on airport users. [211857]

Charlotte Atkins: The Strategic Rail Authority has considered the impacts on Gatwick airport users while developing the proposals in the Draft Brighton Mainline Route Utilisation Strategy. Representations from consultees on the subject of airport users will be taken into account while the Strategy is finalised.

Traffic Commissioners

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the role of the Traffic Commissioners and their accountability to local councils. [211852]

Charlotte Atkins: Traffic Commissioners are responsible for licensing operators of heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles. They act in a quasi judicial capacity and are independent of central and local government. Local authorities have the right to object to applications for a licence.

Civil Aviation Authority

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Civil Aviation Authority has spent on defending legal actions against it from employees in each of the last five years. [213179]

Charlotte Atkins: The Civil Aviation Authority's costs in the last five years are as follows:

	£
2000	6,375
2001	7,305
2002	8,303
2003	117,901
2004	13,740

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons personal files held by the Civil Aviation Authority on its staff are not regarded as filing systems within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 1998. [213180]

Charlotte Atkins: Personal files held by the CAA on its staff are paper files containing various material, including sickness absence forms, pay review letters and correspondence with the Human Resources Department. The personal files relating to each employee are stored in reverse chronological order.

The personal files are not regarded as filing systems within the meaning of the Data Protection Act 1998 (the "Act") because they do not fulfil the requirements of being a "relevant filing system" as defined in Section 1(1) of the Act. This definition is as follows:

> "any set of information relating to individuals to the extent that, although the information is not processed by means of equipment operating automatically in response to instructions given for that purpose, the set is structured, either by reference

to individuals or by reference to criteria relating to individuals, in such a way that specific information relating to a particular individual is readily accessible."

A searcher would be required to leaf through the documents in a personal file in reverse chronological order to find any particular information. Accordingly the personal files cannot be regarded as a "relevant filing system" within the meaning of the Act.

The Information Commissioner has agreed with the CAA's view.

Mobile Phones

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research the Government had carried out on *(a)* the extent of and *(b)* the safety implications of the use of mobile telephones by cyclists while cycling. [209599]

Mr. Jamieson: We are not aware of evidence specifically on cyclists and the safety of using mobile phones. But the Highway Code already tells cyclists to keep both hands on the handlebars except when signalling or changing gear. The police have powers under sections 28 and 29 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended, to deal with cyclists they consider to be riding dangerously, or carelessly or inconsiderately, through using mobile phones or for any other reason.

Multi-modal Studies

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much has been spent by his Department on multi-modal studies since 1997; [212066]

(2) how many multi-modal studies have been commissioned since 1997; how many have been completed; and how many are still under way. [212100]

Mr. Darling: There were 33 multi-modal studies. 21 studies have been completed. On the final study, the A34 north from Southampton, we are currently considering the results of the scoping study before deciding what further work, if any, should be carried out. Since 1999–2000 financial year, the Department has spent approximately £33.5 million of expenditure relating to the Studies. No further such studies are planned.

Railways

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers travelled on the railways in each year since 1990. [212114]

Mr. Darling: The information requested can be found in Table 1.2 of the SRA publication, National Rail Trends, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to require rolling stock leasing companies to cut the charges which they impose for leases on railway rolling-stock; and if he will make a statement. [211492]

Charlotte Atkins: Rolling stock leases are between two private sector companies, the rolling stock company and the train operating company. However, as set out in the Railways White Paper, because the Government pays for much of their cost through its funding of the rail industry, it is important to ensure that they represent good value for the taxpayer. The Department for Transport's proposals to secure best value from rolling stock leases are set out in the Future of Rail White Paper.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to establish a rail industry national archive; and if he will make a statement. [212203]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The National Railway Museum (NRM), a museum sponsored by DCMS as part of the National Museum for Science and Industry, plans to establish "Search Engine", a Railway Industry National Archive at NRM in York.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of disposing of unwanted assets of the Strategic Rail Authority when it is abolished; [212115]

(2) what budget has been allocated for redundancy payments connected to the abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority; [212118]

(3) what budget has been allocated to meet costs arising from the abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority. [212119]

Mr. Darling: It is not possible to give precise estimates of transitional costs at this stage. They will be met from the existing budgets of DfT and the SRA. In the longer term, the new arrangements for rail are expected to cost less than the present ones.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many staff he expects to transfer from the Strategic Rail Authority to DfT-Rail; [212116]

(2) how many jobs he expects will be lost when the Strategic Rail Authority is abolished. [212121]

Mr. Darling: At present about 430 people work in the SRA and about 100 in the Rail Directorates of DfT. We estimate that the new DfT Rail Group will have some 250 to 300 staff and that some 50 or so other posts for which SRA staff will be eligible may be created in other organisations. It is not possible to say how many staff will transfer from the SRA to DfT since the new posts in DfT will be open to staff of both the SRA and the DfT Rail Directorates. It is not possible to say how many jobs will be lost because there will be a degree of natural wastage.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what redundancy packages will be offered to staff at the Strategic Rail Authority who lose their jobs because of its abolition. [212120]

Mr. Darling: Any SRA staff made redundant as a result of SRA abolition will be offered packages in accordance with their existing terms and conditions.

Trust Ports

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Harbour Revision Order put forward by trust ports will be subject to public inquiry. [213160]

Mr. Jamieson: Arrangements for any inquiries into these Orders will be announced in due course.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is on the payment of a levy to the Exchequer when a trust port is privatised voluntarily. [213161]

Mr. Jamieson: No trust port has sought to submit a scheme for voluntary privatisation in the lifetime of the current administration. Should a scheme be submitted we would consider the level at which the levy should be set, in accordance with the Ports Act 1991, in the light of the circumstances of the case.

CABINET OFFICE

Policy Co-ordination

22. **Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister about policy co-ordination. [211861]

Mr. Milburn: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the right hon. Member for Bracknell (Mr. Mackay) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 709.

23. **Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with Lord Birt about policy co-ordination. [211862]

Mr. Milburn: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the hon. Member for Hertford and Stortford (Mr. Prisk) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 711.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister about policy co-ordination. [211863]

Mr. Milburn: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave the right hon. Member for Bracknell (Mr. Mackay) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 709.

Ministerial Functions

25. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with the National Audit Office about the costs of separating his role from that of the Minister for the Cabinet Office. [211864]

Mr. Milburn: None.

Fiona Gordon

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office (1) what the job description is of Fiona Gordon, an employee of his Department; [213310]

(2) what *(a)* salary, *(b)* pension rights and *(c)* other benefits Fiona Gordon claims from his Department. [213327]

Mr. Miliband: Fiona Gordon is no longer employed as a special adviser.

Kirpan

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will remove restrictions on the wearing of the kirpan by Sikh employees and Sikh members of the public in Government buildings. [211294]

Mr. Miliband: The Government are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and valuing diversity in the civil service, including recognising and respecting people's different religions or beliefs. Accordingly, there is no reason that Sikh civil servants or members of the public should not wear the Kirpan in government buildings, except in places where security policy dictates otherwise and similar items are also banned. In these cases, Departments will have arrangements in place for security storage where the Kirpan can be left during working hours.

Regulatory Impact Unit

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what the *(a)* staffing and *(b)* running costs of the Regulatory Impact Unit was in the last year for which figures are available. [211896]

Mr. Miliband: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my predecessor (Ruth Kelly) gave to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Atlantic Biogeographical Region

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the Atlantic Biogeographical Region; what factors determine inclusion in the list set out in 2004/813/EC, L 387 volume 47 of 29 December 2004; what the purpose is of the list; what obligations are placed on the Government relating to the list; what impact it will have on sites of special scientific interest; what impact it will have on the operations of HM armed forces in the Salisbury area; what additional obligations arise for the management of named sites; what additional powers listing confers for the preservation of named marine habitats; and if she will make a statement on the application of listing of marine habitats to the Common Fisheries Policy. [211431]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK welcomes the European Commission's (EC) decision of 8 December 2004 to adopt the Atlantic Biogeograpical Region List of Sites of Community Importance (SCIs) in accordance with article 4 of council directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (EC Habitats Directive). Sites are included on the basis that they meet the EC habitat directive's selection criteria (annex III of the directive) and are thus considered to be most in need of conservation at a European level. The list is required to enable member states to progress with the designation of these sites as special areas of conservation (SACs) and obliges them to implement appropriate conservation measures to manage and protect these areas if they have not already done so.

The adoption of SCIs and anticipated designation of SACs in England does not impose any additional obligations on the Government, competent authorities, landowners, fishery interests, HM armed forces or other stakeholders because the sites have, following amendments in February 2000, been subject to full legal protection under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.

Canada (BSE)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Canadian Government on the recent BSE case discovered there. [211726]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) has had a number of technical discussions with the Canadian authorities but not specifically relating to the recent BSE case.

Commission Veterinary Experts

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the application in the UK of Commission Decision 2005/13/EC, OJ L6 volume 48 of 8 January, with particular reference to *(a)* the UK border, *(b)* the status of Commission veterinary experts, *(c)* the cost of each expert and *(d)* the number of experts. [211426]

Mr. Bradshaw: European Community import rules require all products of animal origin imported from third countries to enter the Community via specified border inspection posts (BIPs) where they are subject to veterinary examination to ensure the import conditions are being observed. The system of veterinary examination is operated in the UK by local authorities and is monitored by Defra and the European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) to ensure effective controls are in place. There are currently 29 BIPs approved to inspect animal products in the UK.

Commission Decision 2001/881 required that each BIP listed be subject to a yearly inspection by the FVO veterinary experts, unless reduced inspections to certain BIPs had been agreed by the Standing Veterinary Committee (now the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health).

Commission Decision 2005/13 amended Commission Decision 2001/881 and specifies that the frequency and scope of missions by the FVO to border inspection posts should be decided on the basis of risks to the animal and public health in the Community. Factors to be taken into account include patterns of trade in the Community, statistical data available under veterinary legislation, the results of previous missions by the Office, and any identified problem areas. The UK supports this approach.

Veterinary experts of the Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) work to assure effective control systems and to evaluate compliance with European Union (EU) standards. The FVO does this mainly by carrying out inspections in member states. The veterinary inspectors employed by the FVO must have a degree or equivalent diploma and have a minimum of three years relevant experience.

We have no information on the cost of these experts as the costs of the inspection missions are met from EU central funds.

The number of staff working in the FVO has increased from 74 in 1997 to its present complement of 163. Of these, 81 are plant health and veterinary inspectors, who participate regularly in on-the-spot inspection missions.

Departmental Entertainment Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on entertainment by her Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* food, *(b)* alcohol, *(c)* staff and *(d)* accommodation. [204343]

Alun Michael: On each occasion Defra officials are required to consider carefully what form and extent of hospitality should be offered and if it can be justified. This is considered both by the host and the authorising officer, who have to bear in mind the need for economy and the limited funds available.

This will take into account the extent to which participation by representatives from a variety of organisations including business, voluntary organisations and local government assists the Department in forming and testing out policy as well as distances involved and inconvenience to most taking part.

The figures detailed in the following table includes a variety of forms of hospitality including events such as lunch provided for participants at Defra consultative events on farming issues, environmental issues and others of the many issues dealt with by the Department.

Examples include the event at which the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy was launched and a new delivery team headed by Sir Don Curry was set up.

The figure for 2001–02 provided is for a full year and includes three months of DETR expenditure from 1 April to 8 June when Defra was created. MAFF and DETR did not use the same chart of accounts to record expenditure. It was, therefore necessary to carry out a mapping exercise to match up expenditure under the Defra structure.

Hospitality was not separately identified in the expenditure transfer from DETR and may have been absorbed in incidental codes. For the remainder of that year only £1,953 was recorded against Environment. This would suggest that there may have been some misunderstanding on coding within the ex-DETR directorates during the transition and initial months of Defra's existence.

The other factor that may have had an impact on the figures for 2001–02 was the foot and mouth crisis. The Department was very focused on dealing with this crisis and this would have reduced the number of events held where hospitality expenditure would have been incurred.

Hospitality costs 2001–04 (£)

	Food	*Alcohol*	*Staff*	*Accommodation*	*Other*	*Total*
2001-02	59,514	877	33,194	11,055	29,423	134,063
2002–03	156,059	1,905	93,073	23,106	81,870	356,013
2003–04	111,579	1,087	146,140	15,777	16,577	291,160

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206462]

Alun Michael: The following reply is based on the assumption that this question is seeking information about amounts spent in relation to civil litigation.

Defra conducts the majority of its litigation in house with other cases being dealt with on its behalf by the Treasury Solicitor's Department and by external solicitors. Defra came into existence in June 2001 and therefore has no records prior to that date. Defra's centralised records since that date relating to the information requested show only the number of new files it has handled in each year. The information indicates the number of new files opened in each year is as follows:

	Number
1991–92	449
1992–93	359
1993–94	283
1994–95	165

This will usually correspond to the number of new actions/cases but not necessarily so. The number will include arbitrations and other ADR resolution and also claims which were resolved prior to the issue of proceedings and did not in the event proceed to court. Information about the number of actions is therefore approximate. Defra does not hold information in a centralised readily accessible format as to the number of settlements, number of court cases and the costs of each settlement, because collectively such information would involve disproportionate effort and it is not clear that it would help performance.

Treasury Solicitors have records for the number of files for matters concerning Defra on which they have worked in any one year and the total sums billed to Defra including disbursements. The figures for the number of matters do not represent new cases or even new files because it is only matters on which work has been done and so some new cases will be worked on in the following (and possibly subsequent) years. The figures are as follows:

	Number	*£*
2001–02	74	779,074.11
2002–03	57	606,608.30
2003–04	56	440,277.52
2004–05	40	64,097.21

Treasury Solicitors do not hold in centralised and readily accessible form information about the number of court cases and the costs of each settlement. To obtain this information would involve disproportionate effort.

Defra retains external solicitors to provide some litigation services. The same caveats as above apply in relation to the number of matters they have acted upon.

Firm 1:

The total number of matters they have acted upon for Defra for each year is:

	Number of matters
2001–02	175
2003	71
2004	28

The total legal fees paid to them for the period from 2002/to end September 2004 is: fees £4,252,987.50, disbursements £558,981.54, and VAT of £837,543.42 totalling £5,649,512.46.

Firm 2:

This firm has handled 23 matters for the Department since 2001. Its total fees as at December 2004 including disbursements and VAT amount to £2,04[illegible],309.

Firm 3:

This firm has handled seven matters for the Department since 2001. Its total fees to date amount to £1,029,341 plus disbursements of £48,752.67 and VAT of £188,491.36.

We do not hold centralised and readily accessible information about the number of court cases and the costs of each settlement in relation to the matters handled by the external solicitors. To obtain this information would involve disproportionate effort.

Fisheries

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations she has received about the effect of the recent proposal of the European Commission on cod stocks in the North sea; what expert advice she has received on the matter; and if she will make a statement. [211099]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The Commission published on 8 December 2004 its proposals for a regulation on total allowable catches and related measures for fishing in 2005. In relation to North sea cod, these proposals included maintaining the total allowable catch at the same level as 2004, a further strengthening of the days at sea rules and a series of closed areas in the North sea. fisheries Departments received numerous representations on the Commission's proposals from fishing interests, environmental organisations and others. The recently established North Sea Regional Advisory Council produced advice for the Fisheries Council on the proposal. The Government was also informed by advice from its fisheries scientists. At the Fisheries Council on 21–22 December 2004, the Commission withdrew its proposals for closed areas but secured agreement to a strengthening of the days at sea regime. The total allowable catch of North sea cod for 2005—which had been agreed in discussions between the EU and Norway—was confirmed at 27,300 tonnes, the same level as in 2004.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what outbreaks of the Foot and Mouth virus have been identified by the Government as a possible common origin for the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease in the UK in February 2001 and the outbreak of September 2000 in South Africa; [208754]

(2) if she will publish the phylogenetic analyses on which her Department's report Origin of the UK Foot and Mouth disease epidemic in 2001 based its conclusions on the introduction of the Foot and Mouth virus into Great Britain; [208755]

(3) what phylogenetic evidence was used to support the conclusion of her Department's report Origin of the UK Foot and Mouth Disease epidemic in 2001 that the February 2001 UK outbreak and the September 2000 South African outbreak had a common origin as opposed to the South African outbreak being the origin of the UK outbreak; [208756]

(4) whether the Government has received evidence of a Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak isolate that has a closer phylogenetic relationship to the outbreak of Foot and Mouth in February 2001 in the UK than the outbreak of September 2000 in South Africa; [208828]

(5) what further analyses of the genome sequences of isolates from the February 2001 UK Foot and Mouth outbreak and the September 2000 South African Foot and Mouth Disease outbreaks, and their likely origins, have been performed since the publication of her Department's report, Origin of the UK foot and mouth disease epidemic in 2001. [208837]

Margaret Beckett: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 16 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1669W.

New Rural Agency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to appoint the Chairman and Board of the proposed new integrated agency for rural delivery. [211149]

Alun Michael: We would like to appoint a Chair-elect and a Board-elect before the 'Integrated Agency' is formally vested to help guide the development of the new organisation. The timing of the appointment will be dependent on the legislative process for establishing the 'Integrated Agency' in statute. We intend to bring forward legislation as soon as practicable, and to publish a draft bill as an early step.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the effects on costs are expected to be from the proposed merger of English Nature with parts of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service. [211150]

Alun Michael: The Government announced in the 2004 Spending Review the Department's plan to generate efficiencies of £13 million a year by 2007–08 through the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme. Establishment of the Integrated Agency will generate efficiencies from a number of sources, principally reduced estates and staff costs from the merger of the three constituent organisations and the application of Gershon principles to deliver better value for money from back office services. These will contribute at least £6.5 million cumulative efficiencies by 2007–08 with further efficiencies in 2008–09 and 2009–10.

The total main investment costs required to implement the Modernising Rural Delivery Programme as a whole are estimated to be approximately £40 million. These costs are expected to fall in financial years 2004–05 to 2008–09. Of this, it is estimated that around £30 million will be needed for establishment of the Integrated Agency. There may also be an additional ongoing cost associated with providing common terms and conditions for staff in the Agency.

Peat-free Soil Improvers

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress the UK is making towards the target of 40 per cent. of materials for growing media and soil improvers being peat-free by 2005. [211219]

Mr. Bradshaw: The 2001 survey monitoring the use of peat and alternative products for growing media and soil improvers in the UK showed that 37 per cent. of the total consumption of the supply of materials used as soil improvers and growing media was peat-free. In 1999, 32 per cent. was peat-free. A new survey will monitor the use of peat and peat free alternatives for growing media alternatives between 2005 and 2010.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has for meeting the Government's target of 90 per cent. peat-free materials for growing media and soil improvers by 2010. [211220]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently working to establish a stakeholder forum which we hope will contribute to the development of an action plan to achieve sustainable reduction in peat use in the UK. Although there have been delays in convening this forum, we hope to hold a first meeting in the first half of this year.

In addition Defra is sponsoring research through the Horticulture LINK and other programmes (for example WRAP) to develop sustainable growing media solutions for the horticulture industry with less reliance on peat use.

Tree Planting

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what Government initiatives exist to promote the planting of trees; and what assessment she has made of the effect they have had on tree numbers. [211171]

Mr. Bradshaw: New incentives to promote the planting of trees in England will be launched later this year. The Forestry Commission's English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) will combine and replace incentives for the establishment of new woodland that were available under the Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) and Defra's Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS). Defra's Environmental Stewardship Scheme which is replacing Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area Schemes will build on past achievements by providing incentives for small-scale tree planting.

In addition to these England-wide schemes there are various regional and local initiatives aimed at increasing tree cover; notably the National Forest in the Midlands and the twelve Community Forest partnerships based close to urban areas.

Our target is to create 30,000 hectares of new woodland over the seven-year period, 2000–06, of the England Rural Development Programme. In the period 1 April 2000–31 March 2004, 24,198 hectares of new woodland had been planted with WGS and, where qualifying, FWPS support. The majority of trees planted under regional and local initiatives over the same period will have attracted WGS/FWPS support.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Select Committees (Running Costs)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what the running costs of each Select Committee of the House were in the most recent year for which figures are available; and what part of those costs were accounted for by *(a)* staff costs and *(b)* costs of publication and printing. [212144]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Sessional Return (HC 1, 2004–05), published on 25 January 2005, gives a detailed breakdown of expenditure by each Select Committee of the House of Commons for Session 2003–04. Section 10C gives financial information for financial year 2003–04 and Session 2003–04. The figures do not include accommodation and other centrally provided support costs.

Staff salary costs for the Committee Office in financial year 2003–04 were approximately £6.3 million. Several Committees are staffed from outside the Committee Office by staff who in many cases have other responsibilities, as set out at pages 362–63 of the Return.

Total printing and publishing costs in financial year 2003–04 were £1,599,696.95.

DEFENCE

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211677]

Mr. Caplin: Summaries of Ministry of Defence expenditure on external assistance, of which external consultancy is a part, are available in the Libraries of both Houses for financial years 1996–97 and 2003–04.

Expenditure on External Assistance for FY 2004–05 is estimated to be in the region of £251 million.

The Ministry of Defence has not yet set formal budgets for FY 2005–06 to 2007–08.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people working for the *(a)* Army Training and Recruiting Agency, *(b)* Duke of York's Military School and *(c)* Queen Victoria School are employed in Scotland; what the personnel costs of each agency were in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [211821]

Mr. Caplin: There are 60 civilians working for the Army Training and Recruiting Agency in Scotland. Figures for the number of Service personnel working in Scotland are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Duke of York's Military School is located in Dover, Kent, and employs no personnel in Scotland.

The Queen Victoria School in Dunblane employs 70 staff in Scotland, all civilians.

The personnel costs of each agency for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 are found in the agencies' respective annual reports and accounts 2003–04, copies of which have been laid in the Library of the House and are available on the Ministry of Defence website at www.mod.uk.

Gulf War Illnesses

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's latest published assessment is of the illnesses suffered by Gulf War veterans; and if he will make a statement. [210319]

Mr. Caplin: The Government's approach to the question of illnesses among veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict is science-based. To support this approach, we take expert independent scientific and medical advice on the complex and sensitive issues involved. We have invested £8.5 million on independent research projects investigating the concerns of veterans and our policy is to encourage researchers to publish results in the peer reviewed scientific press. Further details about published results are available on our website at: www.gulfwar.mod.uk.

HMS Sussex

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps will be taken to protect any human remains found on the wreck of HMS Sussex; if he will make a statement. [210910]

Mr. Caplin: The Licence Agreement provides that if human remains are discovered they must be treated at all times with the utmost respect and sensitivity. The company is required to ensure that the activities at the site avoid the unnecessary disturbance of human remains and that, where possible, human remains are left in situ. If human remains are accidentally retrieved, the company is required to notify the Government's on-board representatives immediately. The further treatment of those remains will then be as directed by the Government.

Infantry Regiments

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the *(a)* Regimental HQ and *(b)* individual Battalions of (i) Princess of Wales, (ii) Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, (iii) The Royal Anglian, (iv) Light Infantry, (v) Royal Green Jackets, (vi) Royal Gurkha Rifles and (vii) Parachute Regiments are based. [211251]

Mr. Caplin: The information sought is as follows:

Regiment	*Location of Battalions*		*Location of regimental headquarters*
The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment (Queens and Royal Hampshires)	1st Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	Burtphore Barracks, Tidworth, Hants	Howe Barracks, Canterbury, Kent
	2nd Battalion The Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment	Clive Barracks, Tern Hill, Market Drayton, Shropshire	
The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	Trenchard Barracks, Celle, Germany	HM Tower of London, Tower Hill, London
	2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers	Palace Barracks, Holywood, Co. Down, Northern Ireland	
The Royal Anglian Regiment	1st Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	Elizabeth Barracks, Pirbright, Surrey	The Keep, Gibraltar Barracks, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk
	2nd Battalion The Royal Anglian Regiment	Shackleton Barracks, Ballykelly, Londonderry, Northern Ireland	
The Light Infantry	1st Battalion The Light Infantry	Alanbroke Barracks, Paderborne, Germany	Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, Hampshire
	2nd Battalion The Light Infantry	Redford Barracks, Edinburgh, Scotland	
The Royal Green Jackets	1st Battalion The Royal Green Jackets	Weeton Barracks, Preston, Lancashire	Peninsula Barracks, Winchester, Hampshire
	2nd Battalion The Royal Green Jackets	Abercorn Barracks, Ballykinlar, Co. Down, Northern Ireland	
The Royal Gurkha Rifles	1st Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	Sir John Moore Barracks, Shorncliffe, Folkestone, Kent	Headquarters The Brigade of Gurkhas, Airfield Camp, Netheravon, Wiltshire
	2nd Battalion The Royal Gurkha Rifles	Seria Barracks, Brunei	
The Parachute Regiment	1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment	Connaught Barracks, Dover, Kent	Flagstaff House, Colchester, Essex
	2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment	Meanee Barracks, Colchester, Essex	
	3rd Battalion The Parachute Regiment	Hyderabad Barracks, Colchester, Essex	

Inglis Barracks

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to preserve the Middlesex Regiment War Memorial and associated memorials when British Forces Post Office vacate Inglis Barracks, Mill Hill; and if he will make a statement. [211274]

Mr. Caplin: The future of the Middlesex Regiment War Memorial and associated memorials, once British Forces Post Office vacate the site, is being considered in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority (and other bodies, including English Partnerships) as part of discussions to formulate a development framework for the site and its surrounds.

The Mill Hill Preservation Society have expressed an interest in purchasing the Inglis Barracks Officers' Mess and the immediate environs (including the gardens in which the Middlesex Regiment's War Memorial is located) for the benefit of the people of Mill Hill.

Land Mines (Falklands)

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on land mines and land mine clearance in the Falkland Islands. [200043]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 3 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 343W, by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Ministry of Defence Staff

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* officers and *(b)* soldiers are serving in the Ministry of Defence, broken down by (i) location and (ii) rank; and if he will make a statement. [201536]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to Tri-Service Publication (TSP) 9—Rank Structure of UK Regular Forces at 1 October 2004, TSP6—Global Deployment of Service Personnel at 1 October 2002 and TSP 10—UK Regular Forces Distribution Across UK at 1 July 2002.

These publications are available in the Library of the House.

RAF Manual of Flight Safety

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library the Sixth Edition of the RAF Manual of Flight Safety, issued in March 1993, including annexes. [210620]

Mr. Ingram: The Sixth Edition of the RAF Manual of Flight Safety, officially described as Air Publication (AP) 3207, was issued in March 1993. This was superseded by the Seventh Edition, issued in 1998, which was itself replaced by a Joint Service Publication (JSP) 551 in July 2003. It is likely that the Sixth Edition will have been subject to a number of amendments (effected by replacing loose-leaf pages) during its period of currency. It is therefore unlikely that we could "reconstruct" the original version of the Sixth Edition, even if a copy of its later state were to come to light. All other copies have been destroyed in line with departmental procedure.

It is the nature of such documents that there is no reason for anyone to retain them once they have been superseded; perhaps more so once they have been replaced a second time. Therefore it is unlikely that any systematic search would reveal a copy of the Sixth Edition of AP 3207.

In the case of AP 3207 the organisation responsible for its production, the RAF Institute of Flight Safety, has itself been superseded by the Joint Service "Defence Air Safety Centre" (DASC). We have asked the DASC whether they have a copy of the Sixth Edition, but the only version of AP 3207 they hold is a copy of the Seventh Edition, which had itself been subject to three sets of amendments before it was replaced by JSP 551. I am happy to place in the Library a copy of the Seventh Edition of AP 3207, should the right hon. Member consider it useful.

Service Personnel (Belize)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel have died in non-combat situations in Belize in each year since the garrison was first established there. [209659]

Mr. Caplin: There has been a British military presence in one form or another in Belize (former British Honduras) since the late 17th Century. In modern times the Regular British Army went to Belize in 1948 and a garrison has been there continuously since this time.

Between 1 January 1984 and 31 December 2004, 27 Service personnel died in non-combat situations in Belize. It is not possible to provide information on deaths prior to 1984 as centrally held death records are known to be unreliable. A breakdown of these deaths by year is provided as follows.

	Non-combat deaths
1984	2
1985	4
1986	0
1987	1
1988	2
1989	4
1990	1
1991	2
1992	8
1993	1
1994	0
1995	0
1996	1
1997	0
1998	0
1999	1
2000–04	0
Total	27

Trafalgar Celebrations

Mr. Ivan Henderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on identifying areas of support his Department can give to ensure the involvement of the Sea Cadet Association in celebrations of the 200th Anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar. [210681]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The Royal Navy will be providing accommodation and transport around the Portsmouth area, and subsidised food for Sea Cadets participating in the Trafalgar 200 (T200) commemoration programme. Sea Cadets will be actively involved in all T200 events as a visible demonstration of the "Past Glories—Future Horizons" theme. It is planned that over the three days the Fleet are in the Solent (the rehearsal day, the review day and the dispersal day) there will be 2,000 cadets on board ships in the Fleet Review, allowing them to experience the Review at first hand. Significant participation is also planned at both the Son et Lumiere and the International Drumhead Ceremony and for the International Festival of the Sea around five hundred cadets will be involved in a multitude of displays. Furthermore, it is planned that places for Sea Cadets will be made available at the St. Paul's Cathedral Service on 23 October and, on the same date, naval cadets will play a key part at the "Celebrations in the Square" Grand Finale event in Trafalgar Square.

Training (Overseas Personnel)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list countries which have sent military personnel to the United Kingdom for military training in each of the last three years; and how many personnel were sent in each case. [209919]

Mr. Caplin: During the last three years more than 12,000 overseas military personnel, from 137 countries, have been trained at UK military establishments. A full breakdown of the numbers trained, by country, is in the following table.

Overseas military personnel trained in the UK

	Students trained			
Country	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Afghanistan	—	—	7	7
Albania	5	5	7	17
Algeria	—	4	8	12
Angola	2	—	2	4
Antigua and Barbuda	2	1	1	4
Argentina	4	6	8	18
Armenia	2	—	3	5
Australia	83	62	48	193
Austria	52	35	61	148
Azerbaijan	2	2	4	8
Bahamas	4	1	2	7
Bahrain	30	44	34	108
Bangladesh	146	164	6	316
Barbados	3	4	3	10
Belgium	84	105	95	284
Belize	21	15	13	49
Bermuda	18	21	15	54
Bhutan	—	—	2	2
Bolivia	—	1	2	3
Bosnia	—	1	—	1
Botswana	7	8	5	20
Brazil	8	7	12	27
Brunei	133	65	56	254
Bulgaria	12	12	12	36
Canada	191	176	140	507
Chile	54	581	30	665
China	22	32	8	62
Colombia	1	5	5	11
Croatia	4	4	7	15
Czech (Republic)	60	29	17	106
Denmark	29	35	83	147
Ecuador	—	—	1	1
Egypt	13	11	9	33
Eritrea	—	—	2	2
Estonia	10	13	9	32
Ethiopia	1	5	4	10
Falkland Islands	—	—	3	3
Fiji	1	2	3	6
Finland	8	18	6	32
France	74	500	144	718
Gambia	—	3	2	5
Georgia	5	6	1	12
Germany	78	96	78	252
Ghana	15	—	9	24
Greece	48	51	59	158
Grenada	1	—	—	1
Guatemala	6	3	2	11
Guyana	5	6	3	14
Honduras	4	2	—	6
Hong Kong	1	5	4	10
Hungary	23	26	17	66
Iceland	—	—	2	2
India	11	18	40	69
Indonesia	—	4	2	6
Iraq	—	20	10	30
Ireland	62	107	36	205
Israel	4	2	4	10
Italy	60	90	143	293
Ivory Coast	—	—	1	1
Jamaica	22	19	19	60
Japan	4	4	6	14
Jordan	90	69	23	182
Kazakhstan	—	3	4	7
Kenya	25	27	22	74
Korea	2	2	2	6
Kosovo	64	—	—	64
Kuwait	258	420	343	1,021
Kyrghistan	1	2	—	3
Latvia	11	22	8	41
Lebanon	—	7	4	11
Libya	—	—	1	1
Lithuania	12	26	19	57
Luxembourg	1	2	1	4
Macedonia	11	7	2	20
Malawi	1	2	2	5
Malaysia	58	24	47	129
Malta	1	2	5	8
Mauritania	2	—	—	2
Mauritius	5	6	7	18
Mexico	4	1	—	5
Moldova	2	1	3	6
Morocco	2	7	8	17
Mozambique	—	1	2	3
Namibia	2	2	—	4
Nepal	37	19	24	80
Netherlands	277	265	193	735
New Zealand	29	24	23	76
Nigeria	24	20	15	59
Norway	297	326	278	901
Oman	146	204	168	518
Pakistan	56	31	61	148
Panama	—	—	1	1
Papua New Guinea	1	—	—	1
Paraguay	2	—	—	2
Peru	—	—	2	2
Philippines	8	10	8	26
Poland	14	14	18	46
Portugal	82	44	14	140
Qatar	60	46	70	176
Romania	17	24	33	74
Russia	19	8	12	39
Saudi Arabia	75	75	121	271
Senegal	3	11	4	18
Serbia and Montenegro	1	1	7	9
Sierra Leone	8	20	6	34
Singapore	80	57	61	198
Slovakia	26	18	26	70
Slovenia	4	14	3	21
South Africa	20	21	13	54
Spain	12	11	8	31
Sri Lanka	2	4	1	7
St. Christopher/Nevis	—	1	—	1
St. Vincent	—	1	1	2
Sudan	—	—	1	1
Swaziland	—	1	—	1
Sweden	34	65	36	135
Switzerland	11	9	3	23
Syria	3	4	3	10
Tajikistan	—	—	1	1
Tanzania	4	5	5	14
Thailand	25	10	12	47
Tonga	—	—	2	2
Trinidad and Tobago	32	28	4	64
Tunisia	—	3	6	9
Turkey	36	47	27	110
Turkmenistan	—	—	1	1
Uganda	2	6	11	19
Ukraine	18	21	13	52
United Arab Emirates	86	128	332	546
Uruguay	—	1	1	2
USA	224	343	121	688
Uzbekistan	1	7	10	18
Venezuela	—	—	4	4
Vietnam	2	—	2	4
Yemen	8	7	26	41
Yugoslavia	1	4	—	5
Zambia	—	2	1	3
Total	3,774	5,029	3,611	12,414

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Casinos

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to include existing casinos in the proposed pilots for large and small casinos. [211327]

Mr. Caborn: Existing casinos will have the opportunity to bid for licences to become small or large casinos. If successful, they will be able to operate with all the new entitlements authorised by the new licence.

We wish to ensure that the existing industry is treated fairly, and remain willing to consider suggestions to that end.

Departmental Budget

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the resources that have been allocated under each departmental heading and subheading in the 2004 departmental report following the spending review 2004 for each year to 2007–08. [203987]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 13 December 2004]*: The information is not yet available in the form that the hon. Member requests it. I have therefore set out in the table, the summary details of the Spending Review for the Department's sectors. The full information requested will be available in the Department's Annual Report which is expected to be published at the end of April.

DCMS Allocations from the 2004 Spending Review

Resource (£000)

	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Museums, Galleries and Libraries	549,188	578,115	596,115	620,115
Of which:				
Museums and Galleries	384,883	400,126	415,605	423,400
Renaissance	20,000	30,000	32,000	45,000
British Library	120,768	124,751	126,993	129,295
Arts	367,921	412,996	412,996	412,996
Of which:				
Arts Council	367,155	412,155	412,155	412,155
Heritage (incl. Royal Parks)	179,578	180,858	182,358	188,858
Of which:				
English Heritage	121,355	122,735	124,235	125,235
National Heritage Memorial Fund	—	—	—	5,000
Quality and Innovation fund for Culture	0	0	0	6,000
Tourism	54,143	54,614	55,614	55,614
Of which:				
VisitBritain	48,580	49,051	50,051	50,051
Gambling	3,478	2,684	2,684	2,684
Of which:				
Gaming Board	3,478	2,684	2,684	2,684
Broadcasting and CI	123,660	123,151	123,151	123,751
Of which:				
Film Council UK	24,154	23,545	23,545	23,545
Sport	120,643	123,912	151,412	156,912
Of which:				
Sport England	81,118	87,616	87,616	87,616
UK Sport	27,738	29,532	29,532	29,532
Football Licensing Authority	1,128	1,264	1,264	1,264
Other Sport	—	—	27,500	33,000
Total allocations	1,398,611	1,476,330	1,524,330	1,566,930

Digital Television

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that residents of multiple dwelling units can access digital television prior to analogue switch-off; and if she will make a statement. [211736]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: One of the challenges in completing digital switchover will be to make sure that residents in flats and other multi-dwelling units can access digital television services. Many residents living in multi-dwelling units already access digital television services either through communal systems that are capable of transmitting digital signals or through the use of other antennae.

In order to help identify the issues for residents who live in multi dwelling units, we established a dedicated Housing Communications Group as part of the Digital Television Action Plan. The Housing Communications Group includes representatives from leading housing bodies including the Chartered Institute of Housing, the National Housing Federation, the National Landlords Association, tenants groups such as TPAS and TAROE and representatives from the Digital Television Group.

In June 2004, DCMS and DTI wrote to all local authorities, registered social landlords and around 70 housing bodies to alert them to digital switchover and to encourage them to factor this in when preparing plans to develop new housing stock or refurbish or upgrade existing stock.

In August 2004 we commissioned NOP to carry out a research project to investigate the progress made by social landlords. This research will enable us to have a better assessment of what is needed and to get a representative picture of when social landlords believe they will be able to upgrade systems for digital switchover. We hope to publish the findings of this study very shortly.

We have also started work, in association with the Chartered Institute of Housing, to produce comprehensive new guidance later this year setting out the options available to landlords who have properties with analogue communal systems which need to be upgraded. The guidance will be aimed at both the private and social sector landlords and housing developers. We also plan to issue separate guidance for householders which will cover the issues for tenants living in MDUs.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 44W, on digital switch-over, what the few remaining issues relating to digital switch-over are that require to be resolved prior to the Government confirming the timetable for switch-over. [212021]

Estelle Morris: The remaining issues include the precise coverage requirement (number of transmitters to be converted, mode and power combinations), the regional order, the Technical Trial in Wales and most of all, consideration of the interests of the most vulnerable consumers.

Library Services (Wakefield)

Mr. Bill O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been made available to Wakefield Council for library services in each of the last five years. [211225]

Mr. Caborn: The Annual Public Library Statistics, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy for the years 1999–2000 to 2002–03 (the latest available) show the overall expenditure by Wakefield libraries as follows:

	£
1999–2000	3,309,655
2000–01	3,579,166
2001–02	3,684,526
2002–03	3,980,546

The expenditure will be underpinned by funding from a number of sources, national, local and self-generated. Non ring-fenced core funding for public libraries is paid to the 149 library authorities in England as part of the Local Government Finance Settlement. DCMS does not hold a precise figure but I understand that Wakefield has added some uplift to the 2004–05 libraries budget and I commend them for that. I also understand that the Library Service itself has been energetic in forming partnerships and accessing external funding; this is also highly commendable.

Wakefield's libraries, in common with those in the rest of the United Kingdom, are connected to the internet through a £120 million national lottery grant, which established the People's Network.

Additionally, my Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council £5 million over the three years ending 2005–06 to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme which is designed to encourage improvement across the public library sector in England generally.

Museums (Loans)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many objects have been loaned to *(a)* other UK museums and galleries, *(b)* museums and galleries in other EU countries and *(c)* non-EU foreign museums and galleries by national museums and galleries in the UK in each of the last five years. [213057]

Estelle Morris: We do not collect figures on the number of loan objects. In agreement with our sponsored museums and galleries, we record the number of loan venues, which presents a better measure of regional reach. The figures are provided by our sponsored museums and galleries.

The table shows the number of UK and overseas loan venues for all DCMS sponsored museums and galleries from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 and in 2003–04, following a change of target, the number of venues in England to which objects from the collection were loaned.

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
British Museum	238	171	175	209	94
Geffrye Museum	4	6	5	5	5
Horniman Museum	13	19	9	9	13
Imperial War Museum	177	180	180	200	127
Museum of London	106	105	108	111	91
Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester	3	3	3	7	6
National Gallery	97	118	91	88	115
National Maritime Museum	83	68	97	109	93
National Museums Liverpool	93	99	42	95	65
National Museum of Science and Industry	254	259	245	259	217
National Portrait Gallery	72	86	103	115	90
Natural History Museum	3,697	3,116	2,264	2,610	61
Royal Armouries	129	129	138	135	99
Sir John Soane's Museum	10	11	9	8	8
Tate Gallery	135	213	189	154	69
Tyne and Wear Museums[1]	n/a	80	55	41	44
Victoria and Albert Museum	309	295	292	315	255
Wallace Collection[2]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] DCMS began funding Tyne and Wear Museums in 2000–01. Figures for previous years are not available.

[2] Under the terms of the bequest, the Wallace Collection cannot lend objects from the collection.

National Lottery Funding

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research has been conducted regarding those communities which feel unable to accept funding derived from the National Lottery because of religious or cultural belief. [212145]

Estelle Morris: The Department is not aware of any research on this issue.

We would like Lottery funding to benefit as many people and communities as possible. However, we fully respect the decision of those groups who choose not to apply for National Lottery funding, and indeed those individuals who choose not to play the Lottery.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, if she will conduct a survey to ascertain the effect which the absence of potential funding has on those communities unable to accept direct funding from the National Lottery. [212146]

Estelle Morris: The Department is not aware of any research on this issue, nor do we have plans to undertake any such research.

We would like Lottery funding to benefit as many people and communities as possible. However, we fully respect the decision of those groups who choose not to apply for National Lottery funding, and indeed those individuals who choose not to play the Lottery.

NESTA

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total spending on administration costs at the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts was in each year from 1999–2000 to 2003–04; how much was spent on grants in each year; what estimate she has made of *(a)* administration costs and *(b)* grant expenditure in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [211481]

Estelle Morris: The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (NESTA) exists to pioneer ways of supporting and promoting talent, innovation and creativity across science, technology and the arts. It supports awardees both through financial grants and added value assistance that maximises the projects chances of success. Added value assistance includes mentoring and specialist advice.

NESTA divides its non-grant costs into support for awardees—'programme support costs' and non-awardee costs—'non-programme costs' as set out in the table:

Analysis of expenditure 1999–2005

£000

	1999–2000[1]	*2000–01*[1]	*2001–02*[1]	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*[1]	*2004–05*[2]
Awards made[3]	1,948	4,911	5,514	7,271	8,985	10,476
Programme support costs[4]	2,152	3,478	3,758	4,669	6,117	9,052
Other projects directly delivering statutory objects[5]	—	—	3,105	4,613	4,283	4,125
Total programme costs	4,100	8,389	12,377	16,553	19,385	23,653
Non-programme costs[6]	1,814	1,270	1,204	1,270	1,458	1,732
Total expenditure	5,914	9,659	13,581	17,823	20,843	25,385
Non-programme costs as a percentage of total expenditure	30.7	13.1	8.9	7.1	7.0	6.8

[1] Actual.

[2] Forecast.

[3] Awards made (grants and investments) to projects in accordance with NESTA's remit.

[4] Programme support costs includes the direct costs of developing and delivering the awards programme and an allocation of indirect costs, based on estimated time spent supporting the awards programme.

[5] Other projects that directly deliver NESTA statutory objects include Futurelab, and Planet Science.

[6] Non-programme costs include both staff and other administrative costs.

A detailed breakdown of expenditure can be found in NESTA's Annual report and accounts 2003–04 (HC 23) that was placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Spending plans for 2005–06 to 2007–08 will be decided by Trustees of NESTA, having regard to the endowment income available to them and the need to secure value for money when expending funds.

NESTA has key performance indicator targets that measure operational efficiency in terms of non-grant costs. The Department will shortly discuss with NESTA the targets they intend to set for 2005–06.

Television Licences

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the number of residents living in multiple dwelling units who own a television licence. [211737]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The Government have made no such estimate. We understand from the BBC that the data held by TV Licensing on television licences in force does not distinguish between licensable addresses on the basis of whether or not they form part of a building in multiple occupancy.

Tourism

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was spent by her Department and the agencies for which she is responsible to promote tourism in *(a)* the UK as a whole and *(b)* each of the UK regions in 2003–04. [211555]

Mr. Caborn: Grant in aid from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to VisitBritain totalled £45.9 million in 2003–04, of which £35.5 million was allocated to promoting Britain overseas, and £10.4 million to promoting England within Britain.

In addition, the Greater London Authority received funding of £1.9 million from DCMS to promote tourism in 2003–04.

In 2003, the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) were given strategic responsibility for tourism in the regions. Of the total estimate of £58.9 million allocated to tourism by the RDAs in 2003–04, the following amounts were paid by DCMS specifically for tourism:

Regional Development Agency	*Funding in 2003–04 (£000)*
East of England	543
West Midlands	252
East Midlands	252
North East	333
South East England	744
South West England	403
Yorkshire and the Humber	360
North West	713

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Bangladesh

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what *(a)* cross-ethnic and *(b)* cross-faith projects were (i) financed, (ii) planned and (iii) run by his Department in Bangladesh in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [211773]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* current level and *(b)* development since 1997 of religious freedom and tolerance in Bangladesh; what effect the changes have had on the effectiveness of development projects; and if he will make a statement. [211774]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK's current assessment is that there is some cause for concern regarding human rights in Bangladesh, including religious freedom and tolerance. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office maintains close contact with minority groups and together we have raised issues of religious freedom at high-level meetings with the Bangladesh Government. My hon. Friend, the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Alexander) raised the issue of minority rights during his visit in December 2004.

DFID's support to Bangladesh is for poverty reduction and for poor people's social and economic rights irrespective of their religious or ethnic background. Since 1997 all projects financed, planned and run by DFID have been for cross-faith and cross-ethnic populations. As DFID projects are open to all, none are explicitly cross-ethnic or cross-faith.

DFID monitors effectiveness on the basis of poverty reduction as measured through the millennium development goals and so do not analyse performance according to faith- based and ethnic-based categories. In addition, DFID specifically supports civil society organisations that promote the realisation and protection of social and economic rights, including for minorities. Some examples are:

Manusher Jonno (People for People)

To enhance the capacity of, and opportunities for, poor men, women and children to demand improved governance and recognition of their rights.

Samata

Empowerment of the landless to gain access to more resources and to experience less exploitation.

Nijera Kori

To increase pressure on government, politicians and others, to provide better access for poor men and women to decision-making processes, resources and services.

Burma

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian impact of tourism on the people of Burma since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211763]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has not carried out an assessment of the impacts of tourism on the people of Burma. However, we have read with interest, the work of others, for example Respect (www.respect.at) and Tourism Concern (www.tourismconcern.org.uk).

It is Her Majesty's Government (HMG) policy not to encourage tourism to Burma. HMG has drawn to the attention of travel organisations the views of the Burmese democratic opposition that tourism is inappropriate at present due to the political and human rights situation there. As part of this policy, Burmese tourism officials are included in the European Union visa ban and asset freeze.

Engineers Without Borders

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment his Department has made of the projects undertaken by *(a)* Engineers Without Borders UK (EWB-UK) and *(b)* Engineers Without Borders International since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [211775]

(2) how much *(a)* funding, *(b)* logistical aid and *(c)* aid in kind his Department has (i) pledged and (ii) contributed to projects (A) planned and (B) run by (1) Engineers Without Frontiers UK and (2) Engineers Without Frontiers International in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [211776]

(3) what *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind his Department has given to Engineers Without Borders UK for the Sunseed Desert Technology programme in Almeria, Spain; and if he will make a statement; [211819]

(4) what assessment his Department has undertaken of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian impact of the Sunseed Desert Technology project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Almeria, Spain; and if he will make a statement; [211823]

(5) what assessment his Department has made of the long-term viability of the Sunseed Desert Technology project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Almeria, Spain; and if he will make a statement; [211824]

(6) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* marketplace value of and *(b)* technological and scientific advancement achieved by the Sunseed

Desert Technology project run by Engineers Without Borders UK in Almeria, Spain; and if he will make a statement; [211825]

(7) what assessment his Department has made of the value to the *(a)* rural and *(b)* environmental workforce of the Sunseed Desert Technology project run by Engineers Without Borders UK in Almeria, Spain; and if he will make a statement; [211826]

(8) what assessment his Department has undertaken of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian impact of the World Health Organisation, Pan-American Health Organisation and Medical Mission project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Paramaribo, Surinam; what assessment he has made of the long-term viability of the programme; and if he will make a statement; [212193]

(9) what assessment his Department has made of the long-term viability of the Pastoral Social and University of Ibarra project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Ecuador; and if he will make a statement; [212272]

(10) what assessment his Department has undertaken of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian effect of the Pastoral Social and University of Ibarra project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Ecuador; and if he will make a statement; [212271]

(11) how much *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind was provided to Engineers Without Borders UK by his Department for the programme in Paramaribo, Surinam with the World Health Organisation, Pan-American Health Organisation and Medical Mission in each year since its inception in 2004; and if he will make a statement. [212273]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is aware of the good work undertaken by Engineers without Borders UK and also through the international network of associate organisations. Initiatives such as placements to expose engineering students to work in developing countries while making a positive impact on peoples' lives, and related small-scale research projects are welcomed. The universities and companies that support the scheme and students who volunteer are to be congratulated. DFID has not provided funding for EWB and so has not undertaken assessments of their projects including EWB's activities in Ecuador and Surinam.

Regarding the Sunseed Desert Technology programme in Spain, its aims of demonstrating appropriate ways of living sustainably in semi-arid environments are useful and it provides valuable exposure for the volunteers who go to work there. DFID is not involved in this programme and so has not undertaken any assessments of its activities or long term viability.

Health Investment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to encourage developing countries to invest in health through *(a)* building infrastructure and *(b)* providing training. [212223]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID recognises that there is a critical need to enhance capacity in developing countries to deliver high quality, essential health services to the poor and support countries in their attempts to reach the health related millennium development goals.

DFID's approach is to support countries themselves to develop comprehensive policies and strategies to build sustainable health systems, elements of which include a trained workforce and health infrastructure. Wherever possible, this will be within the context of a countries' own overall poverty reduction plans. Over the last five years, DFID has provided significant support for health services development, including £560 million in Africa alone. Of this, an estimated 5 per cent. to 20 per cent., depending on the country, is spent on developing the capacity of the workforce.

HIV Treatment

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps he has taken to improve access to care and treatment for HIV sufferers outside the UK; [212220]

(2) if he will encourage G8 leaders to set a date and timetable for ensuring treatment for all HIV/AIDS sufferers. [212221]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: AIDS is a centrepiece of the British Government's agenda for the G8 presidency this year. By the end of 2005 DFID wants to have agreement among donors and the international system on a well co-ordinated and funded plan to tackle AIDS so that we can move forward on treatment, prevention, care for orphans as well as research into better treatments, vaccines and microbicides. DFID will also work to maintain momentum for HIV prevention and take forward efforts to bring together HIV prevention efforts with sexual and reproductive health services.

The UK supports efforts to provide increased, and eventually universal, access to treatment and care for people with AIDS. We support the WHO and UNAIDS '3 by 5' goal to provide anti-retroviral therapy to three million people in developing countries by the end of 2005, of which two million will be in Africa. DFID is advocating for equitable provision to women and children, and if appropriate, encourage a target of at least 50 per cent. of treatments being directed to women and children.

A recent report (January 26) of the progress of the WHO programme showed us that in the second half of 2004, the number of people on ARV therapy in developing and transitional countries increased dramatically from 440,000 to an estimated 720,000. This shows that progress can be achieved with an effective, coordinated, sustained country led HIV/AIDS response. However, ARV treatment is only one element of the treatment needs of HIV positive people in poor countries, many of whom do not have access to good nutrition, clean water, antibiotics or even testing so that they know that they are positive.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he has taken to minimise prices of medications for HIV/AIDS patients in the developing world. [212222]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: One third of the world's population still lacks access to essential medicines. The UK Government are committed to increasing access to medicines in developing countries, including for the treatment of HIV and AIDS. There has been significant progress in this area. A combination of increased donor financing, competition from generic medicines, offers by research-based companies and improved health systems has led to a reduction in the price of first line antiretroviral medicines of as much as 98 per cent. over the last four years.

The UK Government have contributed to this reduction in prices in a number of ways. We worked with our international partners at the World Trade Organisation to reach the decision of 30 August 2003 allowing developing countries with no, or insufficient, manufacturing capacity in their pharmaceutical sector to import copies of patented medicines. These can be imported from countries such as India, following the issuing of a compulsory license in both the importing and exporting country. This important decision should help to increase the supply and availability of quality medicines.

DFID has significantly increased its funding for AIDS related programmes, including for treatment. The Department has committed to spend at least £1.5 billion on AIDS- related programmes over the next three years, and have doubled our funding to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria. Increased donor financing to buy medicines has contributed to the reduction in prices by increasing demand.

DFID has also committed over £1.5 billion since 1997 to strengthen developing country health systems. This includes support to pharmaceutical procurement systems. Good quality systems can help to reduce prices. In addition, the UK supports the World Health Organisation's (WHO)'s work on 'pre-qualification' which increases access to quality, affordable medicines—both patent and generic—in developing countries.

The UK Government have also worked directly with stakeholders, including the pharmaceutical industry, to increase access to medicines. In 2001 the Prime Minister established a high level UK "Working Group on Increasing Access to Essential Medicines in the Developing World". This reported in November 2002, recommending more support for research and development for diseases disproportionately affecting developing countries, and a global framework to facilitate voluntary, widespread, sustainable and predictable, differential pricing by pharmaceutical companies. This was followed in June 2004 by "Increasing access to essential medicines in the developing world: UK Government policy and plans", which detailed how the UK Government are working in partnership with developing country governments, donors, international agencies, NGOs and the private sector to increase access to medicines.

DFID has been engaging with pharmaceutical companies to develop a framework encouraging 'good practice' in the pharmaceutical industry so as to increase access to medicines. This framework seeks to recognise the good work of the many companies in the industry, and to encourage pharmaceutical companies to go further by:

Engaging in widespread differential pricing of medicines in developing countries.

Increasing research and development investment for diseases affecting developing countries, including through engagement in public-private partnerships.

Working to support broader health and development goals in developing countries, including by considering voluntary licenses, and

Reporting on activities designed to increase access to medicines.

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how the expenditure on orphans and vulnerable children that is specified in the AIDS strategy will be recorded to ensure that it reaches those children; [211155]

(2) what indicators the UK Government are intending to use for monitoring expenditure of the £150 million allocated to meet the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. [211154]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A new sector code "Social Protection for Children" has been created in DFID's internal coding system. All expenditure which attracts this sector code and is also AIDS relevant (has an AIDS code) will be recorded as contributing to the £150 million on orphans and vulnerable children mentioned in the UK AIDS Strategy as activities are actually undertaken and paid for (not just as funds are committed). DFID might create other codes in the future if AIDS-related orphans and vulnerable children work is being undertaken which cannot be described as "social protection".

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the UK Government are taking to ensure that orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS are considered as a priority issue in the European Union's forthcoming revised Programme for Action on Poverty Diseases. [211156]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Along with other member states, we are engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not address orphans and vulnerable children and we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations. Discussions on the new EU development policy have only just started. The Commission has produced a 'Consultation on the future of EU Development Policy Issues Paper', which includes consideration of the broad themes of 'Development of human resources and citizens' rights' and 'Combating inequality and promoting social cohesion', both of which are likely to include consideration of orphans and vulnerable children. Consultations with members of the European Parliament and other member states will take place in due course.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action the UK Government will be taking in 2005 to secure the commitment of other *(a)* G8 Governments and *(b)* EU member states (i) to endorse and (ii) to earmark resources for the implementation of the framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children living in a world with HIV/AIDS. [211157]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID will use its Presidencies of the G8 and the EU to increase action on AIDS. This will include attention to the situation of children affected by the pandemic, the orphans and vulnerable children. Committing resources to implement the "Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) living in a world with HIV and AIDS", which is the global guidance developed by UNICEF and partners and widely endorsed by the international community, including DFID, is key. The framework is being translated into national OVC action plans—16 have been developed in Sub-Saharan Africa and more are being planned.

DFID has announced a commitment to spend at least £150 million over three years on OVCs (of which £44 million will go to UNICEF for the development and implementation of national OVC action plans). We will be encouraging other G8 and EU member states to increase their support to national programmes. The USA has, like us, already earmarked funding and endorsed the framework as have Germany and Denmark. Canada and France also see OVCs as a priority issue, yet others have not yet followed this line.

Along with other member states we are engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not address orphans and vulnerable children and we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations. Discussions on the new EU Development Policy have only just started. The Commission has produced a 'Consultation on the future of EU Development Policy Issues Paper', which includes consideration of the broad themes of 'Development of human resources and citizens' rights' and 'Combating inequality and promoting social cohesion', both of which are likely to include consideration of orphans and vulnerable children. Consultations with members of the European Parliament and other member states will take place in due course.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's priority countries are in regard to orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. [211165]

Hilary Benn: At the launch of "Taking Action: The UK's strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world", the Prime Minister announced that £150 million would be dedicated to helping orphans and other children made vulnerable by AIDS, especially in Africa.

Our priority countries are those countries where we have a Public Sector Agreement. In Africa these are Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and, Zimbabwe.

DFID will be working in most of these countries in support of the development and implementation of national action plans for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children. In addition, we will be providing support to some of the worst affected countries in Southern Africa, such as Namibia and Swaziland through a regional programme of support implemented by UNICEF.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his plans are for including Asian countries in future plans for orphans and vulnerable children. [211166]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is planning a programme of support to UNICEF in Asia to help prepare an improved regional analysis of the needs of orphans and vulnerable children, and to enhance advocacy by Asian groups involved in this work. This will include those affected by HIV and AIDS. The bilateral programme already provides some support in this area and there are plans to extend our support to orphans and vulnerable children through our country assistance programmes. For example in India, DFID supports targeted interventions for street children, who are particularly vulnerable. DFID also provide funds for the UNICEF/Government of India school AIDS education programme. In Cambodia DFID is supporting the review of the national HIV and AIDS plans, which is expected to strengthen action for orphans and vulnerable children.

Kenya

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effects of UK aid on infrastructure development in Kenya during 2004. [211813]

Hilary Benn: DFID made no direct investments in infrastructure in Kenya during 2004 and therefore made no formal assessment of the effects of its aid on infrastructure development during that period.

Many other donor agencies including the World Bank, the European Commission, some UN agencies, the Germans, Swedes, Japanese, French and international Non-Government Organisations contribute significantly to infrastructure development directly in Kenya. As a result, we have focused our support to other critical sectors such as health and education where we assessed our funding would have more impact. DFID has therefore gradually reduced its support to direct investment in infrastructure over the past few years and nearly all our remaining stand-alone projects in roads and water/sanitation were closed down during 2002 and 2003. DFID Kenya maintains direct support to Oxfam and Action Aid who continue to provide water and sanitation services to marginalised communities in Kenya.

Microenterprises

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* economic and *(b)* social value of the introduction of microenterprises aimed at providing mechanised peanut butter processing and corn grinding, with particular reference to Sanankoroni and Mountougoula in Mali; and if he will make a statement. [212162]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has no bilateral programme in Mali and therefore have not assessed the impact of agricultural microenterprises there.

Rapid Assesment Action Planning

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department plans to be involved in the second round of UNICEF-led Rapid Assessment Analysis Action Planning plans in 2005. [211151]

Hilary Benn: Through our country programmes, DFID is engaged with the first round of UNICEF-led Rapid Assessment, Analysis and Action Plan (RAAAP) processes in Africa and will be providing support for the implementation of the costed national action plans in selected countries. DFID is currently in consultation with UNICEF headquarters and regional offices on plans for the further country assessments and action planning. The details of these processes have yet to be finalised, but we expect the support we announced at the Global Partners' Forum in December 2004 for UNICEF on orphans and vulnerable children to contribute to these.

The Global Partners' Forum meeting held at the World Bank in December 2004 demonstrated that the Framework is widely accepted, even if not all agencies have officially endorsed it. The key issue now is ensuring it is put into practice. A good start has been made in sub-Saharan Africa through the rapid assessment; analysis and action plan processes (RAAAP). This has resulted in the development of 16 national action plans for orphans and vulnerable children based on the framework. For some of these, we are considering providing support for implementation.

World Trade Organisation

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the likely trade gains to least developed countries under the Doha Development Agenda; and if he will make a statement. [213086]

Hilary Benn: Despite the difficulties of estimating the effects of trade reform, World Bank figures indicate that eliminating all barriers to trade in goods would generate an extra US$250 billion—$620 billion in global income, up to half of which would go to developing countries. They further estimate that a pro-poor outcome to the Doha Development Round of negotiations could reduce the number of people living on less than $2 a day by 144 million, with sub-Saharan Africa seeing the greatest reduction—over 60 million.

We need to keep the Doha Development Agenda as ambitious as possible in order to realise these gains. The EU, along with several other World Trade Organisation (WTO) members, already provides duty free and quota free access for least developed countries under the "Everything But Arms" initiative; DFID would like to see other WTO members extend similar market access to these countries.

It is also important to tackle all distortions in world agricultural trade—tariffs, quotas and unfair forms of export competition. Progress in this area will determine the extent to which poor people, like the cotton producers of Benin, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mali will benefit from the outcome of the Doha Round.

However, World Bank research also emphasises that market access is necessary but not sufficient for the least developed countries to maximise the potential trade gains from multilateral trade liberalisation under the Doha Round.

We must also acknowledge and tackle the many supply side constraints faced by the poorest countries. This will require a combination of domestic reforms, technical assistance and capacity building, to enable their producers to take better advantage of new market opportunities abroad, for example, through meeting the stringent product standards that their exports often face.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Community Interest Companies

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on social enterprises since the Community Interest Company title was introduced under the Companies (Audit Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004; and if she will make a statement. [211798]

Jacqui Smith: No research on social enterprises has been commissioned since CICs gained Royal Assent in October 2004.

The Social Enterprise Unit, DTI, together with English Regional Development Agencies and the devolved administrations, has been undertaking a project to establish baseline data on the nature and extent of social enterprises across the UK. This project is one of our commitments in "Social Enterprise: a strategy for success". Thousands of enterprises have taken part in short telephone surveys, which were completed in December 2004. The data is currently being analysed and results are expected to be published in spring 2005.

In addition, the Social Enterprise Unit, in consultation with the devolved administrations and other Government Departments, is in the process of commissioning a review of the Government's strategy for social enterprise to help inform future action in this area.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made since the creation of Community Interest Companies under the Companies (Audit Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 further to support the establishment of social enterprises; and if she will make a statement. [211820]

Jacqui Smith: The substantive provisions of the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004 relating to community interest companies will come into force on the 1 July 2005. Mr. John Hanlon has been appointed as the independent regulator of community interest companies and will take up office on 1 April. My Department is working with him, his staff and Companies House to ensure applications to form a community interest company can be made from July 2005 onwards. My Department is also considering responses to the consultation on draft community interest company regulations which closed in January 2005. A final draft of the regulations will be laid before both Houses soon.

My Department has published two fact sheets providing information on community interest companies and the role of the regulator. A third fact sheet providing further information is in preparation. More than 30 individuals and organisations have registered their intention to form or convert to community interest companies since the publication of the first fact sheet in December 2004. The regulator and his office will issue more detailed guidance before July 2005.

More broadly, the Social Enterprise Unit within the Small Business Service continues to lead Government activities to support the establishment and growth of social enterprises, within the framework laid out in the 2002 document 'Social enterprise: a strategy for success'

ECGD

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, for what amount she has budgeted to cover liability for costs *(a)* of her Department and *(b)* of those whom her Department has agreed to pay all or part of their costs in relation to the action for judicial review brought against her Department by Corner House in respect of Export Credits Guarantee Department forms. [210619]

Mr. Alexander *[pursuant to the reply, 26 January 2005, Official Report, c. 398 W]*: Unfortunately a number of words were omitted from my original answer. Following is the full text.

The current estimate for what ECGD will pay its external solicitors and counsel in relation to the action for judicial review brought by Corner House is £64,710. The costs of The Corner House, which ECGD will pay under the terms of the High Court settlement of 13 January 2004, have yet to be agreed.

Indonesia (Arms Exports)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Export Credits Guarantee Department included agent's commission in the overall contract sum to be underwritten on the sale of armoured vehicles by Alvis Plc to Indonesia. [211096]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 27 January 2005]*: Contractual arrangements (including agent's commission) are provided to ECGD by exporters in confidence.

Manufacturing Support

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on Government support for the manufacturing industry in the last financial year. [210901]

Jacqui Smith: The Department of Trade and Industry spent approximately £0.5 billion on business support programmes in the last financial year ending April 2004.

In addition, the Department supports business through a number of different mechanisms such as Regional Selective Assistance and initiatives on, among other things, innovation, technology and best practice. For example the 2004 Spending Review (SR2004) allocated £320 million to the Technology Strategy, and total funding for Manufacturing Advisory Service over the SR2004 period will be £34 million—representing an increase of £4 million compared with the SR2002 period.

While we will have aggregate data for each, collating how much was spent on manufacturing in total could be provided only at a disproportionate cost not least because of the complexity of the Standard Industrial Classification codes.

As a indication of Government investment in manufacturing, Regional Selective Assistance grants worth £295 million were offered in the period April 2003 to April 2004, approximately 80 per cent. of which were to manufacturing companies, securing £1.9 billion investment and safeguarding/creating 43,100 jobs.

Minimum-price Alcohol

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the implications for competition of pubs and nightclubs being obliged to charge minimum prices for alcohol as a means of tackling alcohol misuse; and if she will make a statement. [211236]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Chapter One of the Competition Act 1998 prohibits agreements, decisions or practices that restrict competition, including those that seek to fix prices or trading conditions. In the context of inter-departmental discussions on the options for tackling problems associated with excessive alcohol consumption, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has provided advice about the effects of competition law.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total expenditure by her Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211672]

Ms Hewitt: The information requested is not held centrally in the form required and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Rural Post Offices

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the term rural is defined for the purposes of UK Government policy on post offices; and what discussions she has had with Ministers in the Scottish Executive about such a definition. [211999]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The classification of a post office branch as urban or rural is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. The company has for several years classified rural post offices on the basis of a Countryside Agency definition of a rural settlement as one with less than 10,000 inhabitants. This definition replaced their earlier one which classified communities up to 6,300 people as 'rural'. The wider definition was adopted by the Post Office in the autumn of 2000 when the formal requirement to maintain the rural network and prevent avoidable closures was placed upon them by this Government. Around 1,500 additional post offices were brought under the protected 'rural' category as a result of the adoption and implementation of the wider definition.

While there have not been any specific discussions held with Ministers in the Scottish Executive over the company's definition of rural post offices, officials from my Department are in regular contact with officials at the Scottish Executive on the issue of rural post offices.

Ukraine

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps Her Majesty's Government are taking to facilitate UK-Ukraine trade and foreign direct investment by UK companies into the Ukraine. [213276]

Mr. Alexander: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) supports businesses in the UK seeking to compete internationally. UKTI brings together the overseas resources of the FCO with the Department of Trade and Industry, and has strong partnerships with Regional Development Agencies in England, as well as with the Devolved Administrations.

Advice and assistance is available from UKTI for UK companies interested in trading with, and investing in, the Ukraine.

Wholesale Gas Market

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the operation of the UK forward wholesale gas market; what assessment her Department has made of the differential between the UK forward gas price and comparable prices in the rest of the EU; and if she will make a statement on the effect of the UK forward wholesale gas market on the competitiveness of intensive industrial consumers of gas. [211249]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Great Britain has the most highly developed forward gas market in the European Union. UK forward prices for contracts delivering gas in Quarter 1 2005 and winter 2005–06 rose slowly through 2004, peaking sharply in October, before falling back. Continental forward prices (Zeebrugge Hub, Belgium, and TTF, the Netherlands) followed a similar pattern, but did not peak as severely and remain below the UK price. The relatively high UK winter forward prices reflect seasonality and the potential tightness in the market.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State met representatives of energy intensive users before Christmas and agreed that officials would work with industry to develop ideas for improving the operation of the forward gas market. I have also held discussions with companies on this issue.

Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she expects to postpone further the Government's decision to allow the NHS to re-coup costs under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 until the Office of Fair Trading has completed its latest investigation into the cost of employers' liability insurance. [210304]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

The consultation exercise has only recently ended and we are still analysing the responses. It would therefore be premature to make any announcements on next steps or to make the responses publicly available at this stage. When we have completed our analysis, we will in due course publish a summary of responses in accordance with the provisions of the Government's code of practice on consultations. At that time, we will make the responses themselves available in the Library.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Budget Allocations

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total spending on the *(a)* Union Learning Fund, *(b)* Adult Learning Inspectorate, *(c)* Wellbeing Project, *(d)* National College of School Leadership, *(e)* Sector Skills Development Agency and *(f)* Office of Fair Access was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04; and what the planned expenditure is on each for each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08. [211480]

Derek Twigg: Information on total spending can be provided from the year in which the body started operation or the initiative began. The following table shows expenditure in £ millions.

£ million

Body/initiative	*Date began*	*1998/99*	*1999/2000*	*2000/01*	*2001/02*	*2002/03*
Union Learning Fund	1998/99	1.7	3.1	3.9	6.3	7.4
Adult Learning Inspectorate	2001/02	—	—	—	17.1	24.5
Wellbeing Project	2003/04	—	—	—	—	—
National College of School Leadership	2001/02	—	—	—	26.5	60.5
Sector Skills Development Agency	2002/03	—	—	—	—	15.9
Office for Fair Access	2005/06	—	—	—	—	—

Body/initiative	*Date began*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*	*2006/07*	*2007/08*
Union Learning Fund	1998/99	12.2	14.2	14.4	14.4	14.4
Adult Learning Inspectorate	2001/02	27.8	27.6	28.2	28.1	28.6
Wellbeing Project	2003/04	1	1	—	—	—

Body/initiative	*Date began*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*	*2005/06*	*2006/07*	*2007/08*
National College of School Leadership	2001/02	92.6	115.5	99.2	—	—
Sector Skills Development Agency	2002/03	34.9	69.7	66.6	61.4	60.2
Office for Fair Access	2005/06	—	0.5	—	—	—

Notes:

1. 2004/05 figures are latest forecasts of end year expenditure.
2. 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08 figures are indicative only.
3. Figures for 2006/07 and 2007/08 for the National College of School Leadership have yet to be finalised.
4. Funding for the Wellbeing Project ends in 2005/06.
5. Figures for the Adult Learning Inspectorate and the Sector Skills Development Agency in 2006/07 and 2007/08 reflect efficiency savings agreed as part of the review carried out by Sir Peter Gershon.

Bullying

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to deal with bullying in schools. [211833]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The Department is deeply concerned about the distress bullying causes and the effect it has on lives and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance pack 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence', the anti-bullying Charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying.

In November 2003 to June 2004 we ran a series of regional conferences, part of the 'Make The Difference' campaign. These conferences, which were well attended, offered an opportunity for schools and other partners to share good practice on this issue and to learn at first hand about what has worked elsewhere. In July 2004 we funded the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), a grouping of voluntary sector organisations, including Childline and the NSPCC. The Alliance works to support schools in addressing bullying behaviour. November 2004 saw the launch of the first ever National Anti-Bullying week which featured a variety of events including a Radio One campaign and a new public information film. An event on countering racist bullying will be taking place in March 2005.

Domestic Violence

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to ensure that *(a)* regulations, *(b)* training and *(c)* the Common Assessment Framework for Information Sharing Databases in Children's Services takes full account of domestic violence and recognises it as a serious child protection issue. [213126]

Margaret Hodge: We recognise the importance of ensuring that children are protected from domestic violence. In framing the regulations, guidance and staff training that will govern the operation of information sharing databases, or indexes, we will address protection from domestic violence. This will include the facility for certain details, such as an address, to be blocked out or not to appear on the index at all where a parent has good cause to believe that the inclusion of such information may lead to a crime being committed. It will include ensuring that training for index managers and users covers the right of the child to be protected from harm and the fact that this qualifies the right of a parent to access to information, for example, about a child's current address. We will also ensure that similar issues are addressed as appropriate in the guidance and training for introduction of the Common Assessment Framework.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of those in receipt of education maintenance allowance in England are studying in *(a)* schools, *(b)* further education colleges, *(c)* sixth form colleges, *(d)* private schools and *(e)* institutions which are not recognised education providers; and if she will make a statement. [209600]

Dr. Howells: As of the 6 January 2005 there were 262,823 young people who had received an EMA payment. Of these 167,353 (67.3 per cent.) attended FE colleges and 6th form colleges, 86,054 (32.7 per cent.) attended schools, and 5,443 (2.1 per cent.) were studying in independent and special schools. The remaining 3,973 (1.5 per cent.) students study with a range of institutions including dance and drama schools, outreach providers, charities and specialist institutions.

Education, Youth and Culture Council

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what the outcome was of the Education, Youth and Culture Council held on 15 and 16 November; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [201337]

Dr. Howells *[pursuant to his reply, 7 December 2004, Official Report, c. 433W]:* I am reporting back on the outcome of the culture session of the Education, Youth and Culture Council, which was attended by Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Minister for Heritage and the Media, on 16 November. My earlier response provided details of the Education and Youth parts of the council only, and indicated that colleagues at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport would be writing to you with a short summary of what happened on the culture part. However, I have since been advised that outcomes of all parts of council meetings should be provided by written parliamentary answer. As the parliamentary question was put down for reply by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, it is, therefore, appropriate that the reply comes from this Department. I apologise for the delay in providing the information on the culture part of the council.

During the culture/audiovisual session, Ministers discussed the Commission's proposed 2007–13 culture programme, which will provide funding for cooperation between cultural organisations. Discussion focused on two areas of contention: *(a)* whether individual sectors should be specifically singled out in the decision and *(b)* whether and how to enable smaller organisations to participate. The UK submitted a written statement calling for an open programme and bigger projects to ensure the EU-level added value of the programme.

Ministers adopted a two-year work plan on culture, which will focus on five topics: contribution of culture and audiovisual industries to the Lisbon Agenda; digitisation of cultural heritage; improving the Commission's Culture Portal on the Europa site; mobility of museum collections; and improving the mobility of artists.

The council approved without discussion the nominations of Dr. Brian Hennessy (Ireland) and Bert van Meggelen (Netherlands) as the council representatives on the European Capitals of Culture selection panel for 2005.

The council gave unanimous agreement on the mandate authorising the Commission to negotiate on behalf of the EC in negotiations of the draft UNESCO convention on cultural diversity. However the UK, supported by Greece, called for a non-paper to clarify how co-ordination of an EU line would operate in practice to ensure that respective roles and responsibilities of the Commission, the presidency and the member states were clarified. The UK also took the opportunity to emphasise that the final UNESCO convention must not undermine trade negotiations in other international fora.

Ministers then discussed the Commission's proposed Media 2007 Programme, which provides financial support for the European film industry. Discussions focused on whether the programme should offer more support to television broadcasters and countries with limited film making capabilities.

The UK submitted a written statement calling for further quantified information on the effectiveness of the programme expenditure in achieving its aims, the establishment of an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the programme, and mechanisms to secure added value at a European level.

The council agreed without comment a general approach on a Recommendation on Film Heritage, which encourages member states to establish national archives for films.

The council agreed a general approach on a Recommendation on the Protection of Minors and Right to Reply. Lord McIntosh submitted a minute statement explaining that, while we agreed with the parts of the proposal aimed at improving children's media literacy, the UK objected to the parts of the recommendation which lean in the direction of content regulation of the internet and to applying right to reply to the online environment. Lord McIntosh explained that the UK felt that these elements of the recommendation would work contrary to its overall aim of improving competitiveness in the audiovisual sector.

During the course of a discussion on Public Service Broadcasting, which was continued over lunch, Lord McIntosh pointed out that the council should not seek to cut across European competition rules.

Finally, the Luxembourg Minister, Octavie Modert, presented plans for their presidency. She mentioned that they would be looking at intercultural dialogue and cultural tourism and would explore establishing an Anna Lindh foundation. She explained that there would be a culture ministerial on 26–27 June, a seminar on Television without Frontiers in May and a conference on high-definition television in June.

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the outcome was of the Education, Youth and Culture Council held on 15 and 16 November 2004; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if she will make a statement. [209500]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies given on 7 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 433W, and today 1 February 2005.

Enterprise Education

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was allocated by the Government to support enterprise in the curriculum in *(a)* secondary schools and *(b)* further education colleges in (i) 2001–02, (ii) 2002–03, (iii) 2003–04 and (iv) 2004–05 including Enterprise Week in 2004; and if she will make a statement. [209601]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Over the past two years the Government invested £15 million to over 195 fund enterprise pathfinder projects involving over 700 school and £16 million on the Enterprise Advisers service to help prepare schools in deprived areas for Enterprise Education. In addition, from September 2005 funding of £60 million will provide an Enterprise Education entitlement for all the key stage 4 pupils.

Funding to support Enterprise Education in Further Education is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council and I have therefore asked Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, to write to my hon. Friend. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

The DfES worked closely with Enterprise Insight to support Enterprise Week 2004 in ways other than financial.

Funding

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 819W, on funding, when the cash terms series will be placed in the Library; and what the reasons are for the delay in providing the information. [213158]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Due to an administrative error only one of the tables was sent. The information requested has now been placed in the Library and a copy has been sent to the hon. Member.

Pupil Referral Units

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost of providing a pupil with education in a pupil referral unit was in the last year for which figures are available. [213176]

Derek Twigg: The average cost of providing a pupil with education in a pupil referral unit in 2002–03 was £10,000.

Rural Areas

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what initiatives her Department has introduced since 2001 to support education in rural areas. [213133]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills continues to work closely with Defra and the Countryside Agency to support the delivery of education in rural areas.

Since 2001 guidance for Sure Start Local Programmes has been revised to allow a different approach for rural areas, resulting in the 15 rural Sure Start Local Programmes. Of the 46 mini Sure Start programmes intended to provide services for smaller and more scattered populations, 29 are in rural areas. As part of the first phase of the development of children's centres, we have given additional funds to local authorities containing rural wards to develop flexible ways of delivering children's centre services such as early learning and links to health care services. The Government have been encouraging the development of extended schools. Funding has been available since 2003–04, initially to the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas, but from 2005–06 all LEAs will be receiving funding to support the delivery of extended services in all schools over time.

The Broadband Grant includes a 'sparsity weighting' to take into account the higher costs of connectivity in rural and hard to reach areas. All schools will have a broadband connection by 2006. We recognise that local schools are at the heart of many rural communities. Guidance to School Organisation Committees on the presumption against the closure of rural schools has been strengthened. We shall be reporting fully on all our activities to the Countryside Agency as part of the annual cycle of rural proofing reporting by the Government.

School Meals

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to complete the Government's commitment to consider introducing nutrient-based standards for school meals as set out in the White Paper, Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier. [213298]

Derek Twigg: The review secondary school meal standards will start in February 2005, with draft standards provided for consultation in the autumn and finalised early in 2006. An expert panel will consider how best to tighten up the standards to reduce pupils' intake of sugar, salt and fats, and increase their consumption of fruit and vegetables. We will undertake a full consultation on the panel's recommendations before a final decision is reached on the format of the revised standards.

An evaluation of primary school meals is underway and the report will be published at the end of 2005. A review of primary school standards will follow, and we intend to introduce revised standards, following a full public consultation, in September 2006.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Speaker's Committee

Mrs. Shephard: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission, when the Speaker's Committee will next make a report to the House on the exercise by it of its functions. [213596]

Mr. Viggers: The Speaker's Committee has a statutory obligation to make a report to the House on the exercise by it of its functions at least once in each year. At its meeting on 18 January, the Committee agreed a report to the House (First Report 2005) on its general work over the period from 1 December 2003 to 30 November 2004. This was laid before the House on 27 January and will be published on 2 February as House of Commons Paper No. 255. Copies will be placed in the Library and the Vote Office.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Interviews

Anne Picking: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's progress in ensuring that the reduction in benefit processing centres as part of rationalisation plans will not impede or hinder access to face-to-face interviews. [211091]

Jane Kennedy: As part of the departmental efficiency challenge we are transforming the administration of Jobcentre Plus and the Pension Service, to deliver savings and improve our service to customers. These changes will not impede or hinder access to face-to-face interviews.

Between now and 2008 the number of sites where Jobcentre Plus processes benefits will be reduced from the present 650 to around 77 larger benefit processing centres. However, when the rollout of Jobcentre Plus is completed in 2006 customers will still have access to services through around 1,000 sites and other channels such as telephone and internet.

The reduction in the number of sites where benefits are processed will, therefore, not impede access to face-to-face interviews.

Every customer to Jobcentre Plus benefits has access to a personal adviser at the start of their claim and local offices continue to offer advice and information on work and benefits. In some locations services are also delivered through third party premises and provision has been made for customer access telephones in a number of locations.

The Pension Service will move from the current network of pension centres to at least 12 modernised processing sites. These sites have been chosen from the existing network of pension centres and customers will be able to access information through existing channels, including telephone and the internet. In addition, the Local Service of the Pension Service will continue to provide a nationally managed face to face service at venues convenient to its customers.

Benefits

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals were in receipt of *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* disability living allowance, *(c)* attendance allowance, *(d)* carer's allowance and *(e)* child benefit in Southend-on-Sea in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2004. [213203]

Maria Eagle: Figures broken down by local authority are not available for any of these benefits prior to 2000. In the case of carer's allowance and child benefit, no such breakdown is available prior to 2001.

Child benefit figures are now published by Inland Revenue and are not yet available for 2004.

The available information is in the following table. Benefit recipients in Southend-on-Sea at dates shown.

Number

Benefit	*August 2000*	*August 2004*
Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance	6,000	6,900
Disability living allowance	4,400	6,200
Attendance allowance	4,500	5,100
Carer's allowance	n/a	1,745

n/a = not available

Notes:

1. Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. The figures include incapacity benefit credits-only cases.

2. Disability living allowance and attendance Allowance figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. A change in methodology from 2002 means that, after that date, there is a small increase in case loads due to some terminated cases being included.

3. Carer's allowance figures are rounded to the nearest five. The figure includes those entitled to carer's allowance but not receiving it due to overlapping benefit rules.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. data, except carer's allowance which is 100 per cent. data.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claims for incapacity benefit were denied on the grounds of insufficient national insurance payments in the last two years for which figures are available. [213229]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit claims disallowed due to failing the contribution conditions

	Number
January to December 2004	332,430
January to December 2003	340,440

Notes:

1. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

2. Figures are for "disallowed at outset" cases, these are cases where the claimant has failed the contribution conditions for incapacity benefit. However these claims could still result in an award of incapacity benefit credits-only.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. counts.

Lone Parents

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what his estimate is of the number of lone parents in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the past three years; [210959]

(2) what the total expenditure on the New Deal for Lone Parents in Stoke-on-Trent has been in each year that the scheme has been in operation; [210960]

(3) what proportion of lone parents in Stoke-on-Trent have successfully applied for payments under the New Deal for Lone Parents in each year that the scheme has been in operation. [210961]

Jane Kennedy: Information on New Deal expenditure is only available at national level. The latest available information on the number of lone parents in Stoke-on-Trent is taken from the 2001 census. Out of 103,196 households in Stoke-on-Trent, 7.7 per cent. were lone parent households with dependant children.

The available information relating to lone parents in Stoke-on-Trent who have received a New Deal for Lone Parents related payment is in the table.

Number of people on New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) in Stoke-on-Trent who have received a NDLP related payment

October-September	*Total number of people starting NDLP*	*Of which, recorded as receiving an NDLP related payment*
1998–99	310	20
1999–2000	390	10
2000–01	400	30
2001–02	510	20
2002–03	540	10
2003–04	580	0
Total	2,730	90

Notes:

1. Figures include information for the three Stoke-on-Trent parliamentary constituencies (Stoke-on-Trent, North, Stoke-on-Trent, Central and Stoke-on-Trent, South).

2. Payments include training premium payments, childcare subsidy and child care costs and course fee and equipment payments.

3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

New Deal

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of clients of the new deal programmes have left to go into employment, broken down by region; and what proportion of those who do so are still in work or have not returned to the claimant register *(a)* three months later, *(b)* six months later and *(c)* a year later, broken down by region. [210946]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* Information is not available on the length of time individuals have spent in jobs gained through new deal.

Available information on the proportion of new deal participants not claiming a working age benefit after gaining a job is in the following tables.

New deal for young people

	Leavers	Of which, to employment		Proportion of those leaving to employment who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within the stated periods (percentage)		
Jobcentre plus region	*Number*	*Number*	*Proportion (percentage)*	*3 Months*	*6 Months*	*12 Months*
Scotland	82,660	31,020	38	89	70	54
North East	55,400	21,820	39	91	74	58
North West	100,160	38,650	39	90	74	59
Yorkshire and Humber	79,300	30,860	39	91	75	60
Wales	44,380	18,390	41	89	72	58
West Midlands	78,170	26,900	34	91	76	61
East Midlands	43,970	17,510	40	91	74	60
East of England	35,440	14,600	41	91	76	63
South East	40,750	16,500	40	91	76	63
London	107,040	33,340	31	93	80	67
South West	38,650	17,330	45	91	76	63
Great Britain	705,990	266,960	38	91	75	61

New deal 25 plus

	Leavers	Of which, to employment		Proportion of those leaving to employment who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within the stated periods (percentage)		
Jobcentre plus region	*Number*	*Number*	*Proportion (percentage)*	*3 Months*	*6 Months*	*12 Months*
Scotland	51,080	8,530	17	85	67	52
North East	35,230	5,600	16	86	70	55
North West	56,040	10,100	18	85	70	55
Yorkshire and Humber	49,330	8,500	17	87	71	57
Wales	22,440	3,800	17	85	69	55
West Midlands	45,750	7,920	17	87	72	58
East Midlands	27,820	4,950	18	86	70	57
East of England	26,050	5,480	21	86	72	60
South East	31,700	6,540	21	87	72	60
London	87,320	15,160	17	88	76	63
South West	23,310	5,370	23	87	73	60
Great Britain	458,180	82,430	18	86	72	58

New deal for lone parents

	Leavers	Of which, to employment		Proportion of those leaving to employment who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within the stated periods (percentage)		
Jobcentre plus region	*Number*	*Number*	*Proportion (percentage)*	*3 Months*	*6 Months*	*12 Months*
Scotland	39,580	21,440	54	90	80	69
North East	23,510	13,070	56	91	79	70
North West	56,930	30,010	53	92	82	73
Yorkshire and Humber	38,080	21,750	57	92	82	73
Wales	24,480	14,210	58	91	81	72
West Midlands	34,840	17,580	50	92	83	74
East Midlands	22,330	12,440	56	93	84	75
East of England	24,080	12,880	54	93	85	77
South East	38,630	19,610	51	93	85	77
London	46,560	18,440	40	93	86	78
South West	32,040	17,940	56	93	85	76
Great Britain	381,150	199,440	52	92	83	74

New deal for disabled people

	Gained a job	Proportion of those gaining a job who have not claimed a subsequent working age benefit within the stated periods (percentage)		
Jobcentre plus region	*Number*	*3 Months*	*6 Months*	*12 Months*
Scotland	1,540	86	78	66
North East	1,910	83	76	65
North West	1,930	86	79	70
Yorkshire and Humber	650	92	85	76
Wales	2,660	87	78	69
West Midlands	680	89	84	75
East Midlands	810	88	83	73
East of England	580	90	85	77
South East	840	90	85	76
London	860	86	79	71
South West	2,260	88	81	72
Great Britain	14,830	87	80	70

New deal 50 plus

Jobcentre plus region	*Received new deal 50 plus employment credit: April 2000 to March 2003*	*Recorded job entries April 2003 to October 2004*
Scotland	12,180	5,430
North East	6,360	2,340
North West	12,710	4,600
Yorkshire and Humber	10,660	4,000
Wales	7,290	2,400
West Midlands	9,940	4,000
East Midlands	7,290	2,130
East of England	6,880	2,480
South East	7,740	2,790
London	7,750	3,840
South West	9,180	2,810
Great Britain	98,040	37,410

New deal for partners

Jobcentre plus region	*Gaining a job*
Scotland	60
North East	20
North West	50
Yorkshire and Humber	40
Wales	30
West Midlands	30
East Midlands	20
East of England	20
South East	30
London	40
South West	40
Great Britain	1,870

Notes:

1. Information for new deal for young people, new deal 25 plus and new deal for lone parents covers leavers from these programmes between July 1999 to March 2003.

2. Information for new deal for disabled people relates to people gaining a job and is from the start of the programme in July 2001 to March 2003.

Information is not available on numbers leaving the programme.

3. Information is not available on the length of time new deal 50 plus leavers have not claimed a benefit. Information provided is on those gaining a job and receiving the new deal 50 plus employment credit up to March 2003, and recorded job entries from April 2003 to October 2004.

4. Information is not available on the length of time new deal for partners leavers have not claimed a benefit. National information for new deal for partners (on jobs gained) is for the period May 1999 (start of the programme) to March 2004. A regional breakdown is only available for the period April 2002 to March 2004.

5. Information is taken from the DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study which contains all benefit claims that can be linked to the records on the New Deal Evaluation Database.. These records currently cover the period July 1999 to March 2004.

6. The period July 1999 to March 2003 has been used for information provided on leavers from new deal for young people, new deal 25 plus and new deal for lone parents, and people gaining a job through new deal for disabled people, to allow a full 12 month period to elapse before subsequent benefit claims.

7. The proportion not claiming a subsequent benefit does not include people who continued an existing benefit claim which started before the start of the job and continued after the job start.

8. The working age benefits referred to are: jobseeker's allowance, income support, incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance, invalid carer's allowance, bereavement benefit, and widow's/widower's benefit.

9. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

DWP Information and Analysis Directorate.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

House Building (Southend-on-Sea)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses have been built in Southend-on-Sea in each year since 1980; and if he will make a statement. [213165]

Yvette Cooper: The annual numbers of new build completions reported for Southend-on-Sea since 1981 are tabled as follows:

	Completions
1981	290
1982	210
1983	443
1984	447
1986	403
1987	402
1988	249
1989	648
1990	539
1991	402
1992	395
1993	410
1994	288
1995	248
1996	241
1997	154
1998	187
1999	153
2000	152
2001	122
2002	128
2003	120

Referendum

Mr. Heald: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines have been issued by his Department concerning whether a referendum on *(a)* whether to adopt a directly elected mayor and *(b)* a local issue held under the Local Government Act 2003 may be held at the same time as a (i) general election and (ii) local election; and if he will make a statement. [213118]

Mr. Raynsford: Guidelines on the combination of a referendum on whether to adopt a directly elected mayor with a parliamentary or local election, have been issued in the New Council Constitutions Guidance, chapter 13. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued no such guidance in respect of holding a local referendum.

Right-to-Buy

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proposals he has for giving a right to buy to tenants of registered social landlords; and on what terms. [209629]

Keith Hill: The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes, which enable eligible housing association tenants to buy their home, will continue as modified by the Housing Act 2004.

The Government plans to make it easier for all social tenants, including housing association tenants, to buy a home through a new offer—the Choice to own. Details are set out in "Sustainable Communities Homes for all"—the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Five Year Plan—published on 24 January.

The proposals include a new Homebuy scheme to help housing association and local authority tenants to buy a stake in their homes that can be increased over time. We will encourage social landlords to offer the scheme, which will be voluntary, as widely as possible. We plan to consult on further details by Easter and have the scheme running by April 2006.

Ropetackle Site (Shoreham)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 765W, on South East England Development Agency, if he will break down the £3,421,562 budget for the development of the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea by category referred to; on what criteria the decision to provide a community and arts facility was made; what the evidential basis is for his statement that the section 106 agreement provided for a community and arts facility only completed to shell finish; and whether this was altered by subsequent agreements concerning the eventual square footage of the facility. [213334]

Yvette Cooper: The £3,421,562 budget for the development of the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea by category is broken down in the following table:

	£
Site acquisitions	1,200,000
Professional/legal fees	150,000
Site works/reclamation	1,850,486
Other capital costs/service diversions	221,076
Total	3,421,562

On what criteria was the decision to provide a community and arts facility made? The facility was required under Deed of Agreement (Pursuant to Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990) dated 10 December 2002 in accordance with Adur district council's planning brief for the site.

What the evidential basis is for his statement that the section 106 agreement provided for a community and arts facility only completed to shell finish: The definition of the 'Community Facility' states 'completed to shell finish'—page 6 of the Deed of Agreement (Pursuant to Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990) dated 10 December 2002.

Was this altered by subsequent agreements concerning the eventual square footage of the facility? Discussions are ongoing to establish a subsequent agreement between SEEDA and Adur district council. This agreement will allow for part of the Community Facilities to be incorporated into a development for an Enterprise Centre, which will provide premises for new and growing businesses in Shoreham. In return SEEDA will contribute towards the fitting-out of the remaining Community Facilities.

Southend Borough Council

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he and the Minister of State for Local and Regional Government will meet a delegation from Southend-on-Sea borough council to discuss the 2005–06 financial settlement. [213163]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made clear, in the letter dated 2 December to local authorities on the provisional local government finance settlement 2005–06, that Ministers would not meet individual authorities this year during consultation on the Government's proposals. This follows the practice in recent years when no significant changes to the formula have been made. I have also subsequently made this clear in correspondence with Southend-on-Sea borough council. However, I can confirm that we carefully considered all written representations received during the consultation period, including those made by, or on behalf of, Southend-on-Sea.

I met with major groups representing local authorities including the Local Government Association and a group representing the interests of unitary authorities during the consultation process. Southend-on-Sea was represented in that delegation.

I laid before the House on 27 January, the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2005–06. MPs can debate this report in the House on Wednesday 2 February.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received with regard to Southend-on-Sea's financial settlement for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [213167]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received three letters from Howard Briggs, leader of Southend-on-Sea borough council. Ministers have replied to the first two letters and will reply to the third in due course. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has also received a letter on behalf of the council from the hon. Member for Rochford and Southend, East (Sir Teddy Taylor) dated 6 January, to which a reply has also been sent.

I laid before the House on 27 January, the Local Government Finance Report (England) 2005–06. MPs can debate this report in the House on Wednesday 2 February.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211343]

Yvette Cooper: The former Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions agreed a scheme with the Welsh Language Board that was published on 17 July 2001.

Following machinery of Government changes in May 2002, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has continued to operate a Welsh language scheme on this basis. An updated version will be published later this year.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Offences (Stoke-on-Trent)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many alcohol-related violent offences have been reported in Stoke on Trent in each year since 1997; and how many have led to *(a)* prosecution and *(b)* conviction. [209904]

Ms Blears: From the information collected on recorded crime and court proceedings, it is not possible to identify those violent offences which are alcohol-related. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in either data series.

Antisocial Behaviour Orders (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effectiveness of antisocial behaviour orders in Gloucestershire. [210237]

Ms Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are one of a number of tools being used in Gloucestershire as part of their local strategy to tackle antisocial behaviour. Local practitioners have taken a robust stance against antisocial behaviour and report that ASBOs have been effectively used alongside other interventions such as mediation and referral to treatment drug and alcohol programmes.

17 ASBOs were granted in Gloucestershire between April 1999 and June 2004 (latest figures available).

Local people should be encouraged to support agencies by identifying and reporting ASBO breaches. The Together Academy, Action Line and website are able to advise local agencies on how to work together to ensure the effective use of ASBOs.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for extensions to existing antisocial behaviour orders have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused in Gloucestershire. [210243]

Ms Blears: For antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued within Gloucestershire, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), the Home Office has not been notified of any applications that have resulted in extending the duration of an existing order.

Mr. Nigel Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been breached in Gloucestershire; and what action has been taken against those breaching the orders. [210244]

Ms Blears: Data on the number of breaches of an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO), taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database, are currently available for the period 1 June 2000 to 31 December 2002. Persons breaching on more than one occasion during the period are counted once only based on the breach incurring the severest penalty.

Of the five ASBOs issued, as notified to the Home Office, within Gloucestershire for the above period, one person breached and received a detention and training order.

Data on ASBOs breached during 2003 are due to be released shortly.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of initial asylum applications received from 1 August 2003 were dealt with in the target time of 13 weeks from receipt of application. [211241]

Mr. Browne: 88 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in August 2003 to June 2004 had initial decisions reached and served within 13 weeks.

The latest published information on the Home Office Public Service Agreement for 2003–04, ensuring that 75 per cent. of substantive asylum applications are decided within two months show that: 82 per cent. of applications (excluding withdrawals and third country cases[1]) received in 2003–04 (April 2003 to March 2004) had initial decisions reached and served within two months, 90 per cent. within four months and 94 per cent. within six months (compared with 75 per cent., 85 per cent. and 88 per cent. respectively for 2002–03).

84 per cent. of applications received in Q2 (April to June) 2004 had initial decisions reached and served within two months, compared with 83 per cent. for Q1 (January to March) 2004.

Information on the timeliness of initial decisions is published quarterly on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

[1] Cases which may be the responsibility of other EU member states under the L Convention.

Catterick Barracks Inquiry

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many files the Yorkshire police has re-opened in the past year concerning deaths at Catterick Barracks. [208751]

Ms Blears: North Yorkshire police advise that no files have been re-opened in the last 12 months concerning deaths at Catterick Garrison. During that period, two new cases of death in Catterick Garrison were investigated by north Yorkshire police and both resulted in the production of reports to the coroner.

CCTV

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been allocated for CCTV cameras in Warrington in each year since 1997. [209786]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 20 January 2005]*: Since 1997, the Home Office has allocated £31,700 towards a mobile CCTV system in Warrington to ensure full coverage of the system across the town under the Closed Circuit Television initiatives, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme. This payment was made in the financial year 2001–02.

Since the completion of the Crime Reduction Programme, crime reduction funding has been allocated directly to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership through the Building Safer Communities fund and to Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commanders through the BCU fund. These funding streams finance a variety of interventions, including CCTV, to tackle local crime priorities. Exactly how funding is allocated across the area is the responsibility of Warrington borough council and the Greater Manchester police.

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much public funding has been spent on CCTV security cameras in Bolton, North-East since 1997. [203377]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has provided a total of £518,791 to Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council (which includes Bolton, North-East) under the Close Circuit Television initiatives, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme which ran from 1999–2002.

Child Sex Offences

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rate of conviction in cases where the defendant was charged with child sex offences was in the most recent period for which figures are available; and what the rate of conviction in cases where the defendant is charged with child sex offences where similar fact evidence was introduced was in that period. [201501]

Paul Goggins: Statistics of defendants charged with crimes are not collected centrally. The number of defendants proceeded against and convicted for sexual offences for 2003 are provided in the table, together with conviction rates.

It is not possible from the statistics collected to identify those defendants proceeded against, where similar fact evidence was introduced, as these circumstances are not collected centrally.

Statistics for 2004 will be published in autumn next year.

Defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts and sentenced at all courts for sexual offences[1] etc. against minors where the age of the victim is identified by the offence, 2003—England and Wales

Offence	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Conviction rate (percentage)*[2]
Sexual offences involving minors[3]			
Buggery by a male of a male under 16	49	42	86
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a male aged 16 or 17	—	—	—
Buggery by a male with a female under 16	10	5	50
Buggery by a male aged 21 or over with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—	—
Buggery by a male aged 18–20 with a female aged 16 or 17	—	—	—
Indecent assault on male person under 16 years	419	264	63
Gross indecency by a male aged 21 or over with a male aged under 18	1	—	—
Gross indecency by a male aged 18–20 with a male aged under 18	—	—	—
Rape of a female aged under 16	1,037	254	24
Rape of a male aged under 16	114	29	25
Attempted rape of a female aged under 16	97	35	36
Attempted rape of a male aged under 16	17	8	47
Indecent assault on a female under 16	1,956	1,206	62
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 13	71	49	69
Unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	185	248	134
Incest with a girl under 13	10	9	90
Inciting girl under 16 to have incestuous sexual intercourse	3	2	67
Householder permitting unlawful sexual intercourse with girl under 16	—	—	—
Person responsible for girl under 16 causing or encouraging her prostitution etc.	—	—	—
Male aged 21 or over procuring or attempting to procure a male under 18 of gross indecency with another male	—	—	—
Abduction of unmarried girl under 16	7	2	29
Abduction of unmarried girl under 18	1	—	—
Gross indecency with boys aged less than 16	146	91	62
Gross indecency with girls aged less than 16	283	190	67
Total	4,406	2,434	55

[1] Principal offence basis.

[2] Proportion of defendants proceeded against who were found guilty.

[3] Excludes those sexual offences where the age of the victim cannot be identified in the wording of the offence.

Source:

RDS—Office For Criminal Justice Reform

Children in Prison

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women serving a prison sentence have their children with them in prison; and how many children are with mothers in prison. [206204]

Paul Goggins: The Prison Service provides places in Mother and Baby Units for infants up to about 18 months old. On 13 December 2004, there were 51 mothers and 50 babies in those Units.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205761]

Fiona Mactaggart: Records for this subject are not held centrally and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 28 October from the hon. Member for North Norfolk, regarding the costs of surveys into public perceptions of the Home Office undertaken by and on behalf of the Home Office over the past year. [204426]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 13 December 2004]:* I replied to the hon. Member on 6 December 2004.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons Vivien Hamilton of his office asked the hon. Member for Thurrock on 16 December to return to the Department the letter of 2 December from the Minister of State to the hon. Member in order to reply to question 206327 tabled by the hon. Member on 15 December; and if he will make a statement. [207585]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 10 January 2005]:* Vivien Hamilton works in the Direct Communications Unit which deals with all forms of customer communications including the tracing of missing correspondence.

The letter of 2 December referred to in my hon. Friend's earlier question could not be found on the Department's central correspondence tracking system. In these circumstances it is normal practice to ask my hon. Friend's office if they can provide a copy of the letter to assist in tracing the correspondence, and to identify the person best placed to provide a reply to the question.

On this particular occasion, it was discovered that the missing correspondence had been handled directly by my private office.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when he will reply to the letter dated 15 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. K. Gelani; [208706]

(2) when he intends to answer the letter dated 15 November 2004 from the Right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. K. Gelani. [210833]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 25 January 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 1 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Lily Beverley. [208707]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 1 February 2005.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many letters his Department received from members of the general public in the United Kingdom during the year 2004. [208741]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office's central Direct Communications Unit received 25,259 letters and 10,530 e-mails from members of the general public in 2004.

The figures include cases transferred to other Government Departments, and agencies other than HM Prison Service.

Because they are not recorded, the figures do not include:

correspondence sent direct to named officials or units

correspondence sent to the Immigration and Nationality Department, who are currently looking to establish a method of recording public correspondence

correspondence sent to HM Prison Service

"campaign" correspondence where more than 50 identical communications were received

items to which no reply was sent due to lack of return address

items to which no reply was sent due to the offensive or threatening nature of the correspondence.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Crime Reduction, Policing and Community Safety will reply to the letter of 14 October from the hon. Member for Southend, west. [209465]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* I answered the hon. Member's concerns in my reply to his parliamentary question on 3 November 2004. I have, in addition, replied in a letter dated 1 February 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton dated *(a)* 29 November 2004 with regard to (i) Ms Yulima Vicentre Vidal and (ii) Dr. A. R. Estabragh, *(b)* 17 November 2004 with regard to Ms Thembalani Chinyoka, *(c)* 1 November 2004 with regard to Lily Beverley and *(d)* 18 November 2004 with regard to Mr. Shaban Kurkala. [209851]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information is as follows:

(a) (i) and (ii) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 28 January 2005.

(b) I wrote to my right hon. Friend 19 January 2005.

(c) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 1 February 2005.

(d) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 14 January 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 22 November from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to the Roby. [210143]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 21 January 2005.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 6 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Saima Manzoor Ahmed. [212281]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 11 January 2005.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many crimes involving violence against the person there were in each crime and disorder reduction partnership area in England and Wales in each year since the partnerships were established. [209245]

Ms Blears: The requested information is published annually in Home Office Statistical Bulletins on recorded crime. All these publications are available on the Home Office website. The appropriate links are as follows:

Data for 2002–03 and 2003–04:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs04/cdrptabs.xls

Data for 2000–01 and 2001–02:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs2/hosb702chap7.xls (Table 7.06)

Data for 1999–2000:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs/1200data2.xls (Table 7)

Curfew Orders

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, (1) what the cost of purchasing the electronic monitoring kit used for home detention curfew orders is; [200006]

(2) what the total annual cost was of the home detention curfew electronic monitoring kit in the last financial year for which figures are available; and how many kits were available for use in that year; [200007]

(3) what the average cost is of a call out following a violation of an electronic monitoring device. [200008]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office pays one total price to each electronic monitoring supplier for the delivery of a complete electronic monitoring service. The price varies according to the volume of offenders being monitored. It includes the provision of a monitoring centre, field staff and other items, as well as the lease of the equipment. The cost of the equipment, and of visits to investigate violations, is not separately identified.

In the year 2003–04 the total cost of the service was £81 million. A total of 46,472 people were monitored in all categories and a total of 18,586 sets of electronic monitoring equipment were made available during that period.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many curfew orders with electronic monitoring conditions were breached in each of the last three financial years, broken down by probation area. [203829]

Paul Goggins: Information about breaches of curfew orders with electronic monitoring in each probation area is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, this information will be available when new electronic monitoring contracts start to operate in April 2005.

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has held with the devolved Administrations on the content, frequency and timing of television advertising placed by his Department on UK-wide satellite television channels. [201316]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office Marketing and Strategic Communication Unit have held a number of informal meetings over the last year with colleagues in the Scottish Executive to discuss forthcoming communication plans.

The unit has also discussed a number of forthcoming campaign issues with their counterparts in the Welsh Assembly.

Departmental Costs/Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of *(a)* new builds, *(b)* demolition rebuilds and *(c)* PFI projects in his Department in each of the last two years. [200757]

Fiona Mactaggart: The estimated cost of new builds (including demolition where required) and PFI projects over the last two years is as follows:

£ million

	New builds and demolition re-builds	*PFI projects*
2003–04	213.5	92.0
2004–05	197.7	183.2

The PFI costs include fees, IT cabling and furniture where appropriate. New builds exclude leased developments, fees and other costs. Both exclude VAT. PFI costs are an indication of developers' approximate costs as these are not paid by the Department. 2004–05 is estimated out-turn to 31 January 2005.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his estimate is of the *(a)* annual cost and *(b)* total value of the empty properties owned by (i) his Department, (ii) his agencies and (iii) other public bodies for which he has had responsibility in each of the last two years. [200760]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office, including its executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies currently have a number of vacant freehold properties comprising surplus sites, former probation offices, and former prison officer housing.

£

Organisation	Total existing use value	Current annual running cost excluding any internal capital charges
Home Office	8,668,000	401,000
Prison Service	6,314,000	No central records kept

The properties are vacant pending disposal either on the open market or to other Government Departments. Historic records are not kept in respect of vacant properties.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of refurbishing each ministerial private office was in the last two years. [200762]

Fiona Mactaggart: Expenditure mainly on essential alterations to allow internal re-organisation of Ministers' offices including meeting rooms, with some simultaneous improvements totalled £15,624 in 2003–04 and will be nil in 2004–05 excluding VAT.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of *(a)* in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Department in each of the last two years. [200763]

Fiona Mactaggart: The subsidy in financial year 2002–03 was £179,000, and in 2003–04 £179,966. This was paid for the provision of catering and catering services to the Home Office's main central London estate which includes two restaurants and two snack bars/coffee shops.

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total external spending by his Department was on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years; how many full-time equivalent consultants were employed over this period; how many billed consultancy days there were per year; what the implied average cost of each PPP consultant was; how many consultancy firms were used by his Department over this period; and if he will make a statement. [200775]

Fiona Mactaggart: From the available information held by the Home Office total external expenditure on public private partnership (PPP) consultants in each of the last two years, the number of full time equivalent consultants employed in the period, the number of billed consultancy days there were per year, the implied average cost of each PPP consultants and how many consultancy firms were used over the period is as follows:

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Criminal Records Bureau		
Total external spend on consultants (£)	2,007,500	1,284,630
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	—	—
Number of billed consultancy days	—	—
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant	—	—
Number of consultancy firms used	6	8
Airwave		
Total external spend on consultants (£)	713,000	368,000
Number of full-time equivalent consultants employed	3.5	3
Number of billed consultancy days	781	495
Implied average cost of each PFI consultant (£ per day)	950	1,032
Number of consultancy firms used	14	11

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many gyms are available to staff in the Department; and what the cost of providing them was in the last year for which figures are available. [204371]

Fiona Mactaggart: In the Home Office there are two gyms available to staff—one in central London and one in Croydon. These are both self-funding through Home Office sports and social staff clubs. The only cost to the Department for these facilities is the provision of accommodation.

The prison service provides gyms in all its 136 establishments for prisoners to use. These facilities are available for prison service staff to use when prisoners are not using them.

The new Home Office headquarters building at Marsham street will have a sports and recreation facility available for staff to use, which will be self-funding.

Departmental Files

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is the policy of the Department to retain for the benefit of future *(a)* historians and *(b)* applicants under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 the same (i) complete categories of files, (ii) numbers of files and (iii) representative examples of files from categories of files destroyed as had been preserved prior to the passage of that Act. [203297]

Fiona Mactaggart: In accordance with the Public Records Act 1958 S.3, the selection of records of enduring historical value for permanent preservation at The National Archives (TNA) will continue to take place in the Home Office under the guidance and supervision of TNA staff. The Department will also comply with the Code of Practice on Records Management, issued by the Lord Chancellor under S.46 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which underlines the importance of having clear selection policies and disposal schedules in place.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [203298]

Fiona Mactaggart: In accordance with its selection policies and disposal schedules, the Department has destroyed the following number of files in each of the last five years:

	Files destroyed
2000	47,139
2001	128,621
2002	112,855
2003	123,746
2004 (To date)	130,576

The quantity of files destroyed increases because the department continues to create large volumes of paper records, notably in case files, which once they reach the end of their business life are automatically destroyed. The use of disposal schedules setting out when files can be destroyed will continue to be applied to ensure the department only keeps those records that it needs, or that it has agreed with The National Archives should be held for permanent preservation.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what changes have been promulgated in each of the past five years to the guidelines or other criteria for the retention or destruction of departmental files. [203299]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office has maintained a consistent approach to the retention and destruction of files. The requirements to keep records of Government business are set out in the Public Record Act. The National Archive (TNA) produces guidance that further details the requirement so that only material of historical significance is held and transferred to it for permanent preservation. That guidance sets out how long different types of record should be held for and a process for scheduling disposal. The Department has consistently followed this guidance to ensure that records are held for as long as required to meet business needs, that ephemeral material is then destroyed and that only material of long term historic value is transferred to TNA.

Since 1999, the Home Office has produced 86 schedules for the disposal of records which are specific to its administrative activities. It also disposes of its records in accordance with over twenty guidance notes produced by The National Archives (TNA) over the last five years, covering disposal schedules, managing records in the electronic environment, as well as overarching record management guidance. Further details of this guidance can be found on TNA's website at:

http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/advice.

Departmental Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the gender pay gap among staff in his Department. [200768]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2002 the Department undertook equal pay reviews of its pay systems and provided reports to the Cabinet Office by April 2003. A copy of the non-Agency Home Office 2002 Equal Pay Review Action Plan has been placed in the Library.

Since these reviews were undertaken, the Department has since carried out annual equal pay audits of its pay awards and these are shared with employee representatives.

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206482]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office and its agencies hold 2,103 properties which have a combined floor area of 4,380,305 sq m. These comprise offices, residential accommodation, prisons and other specialised buildings.

The figures exclude premises that are held under service agreements and those where costs are shared with other Government Departments where the other Department pays the rent. The total number of properties include both leased and owned residential properties but as the floor areas of this type of property are not known residential floor area figures have been excluded.

Within these figures the Department currently has 109 vacant freehold and leasehold properties which have a total floor area of 31,002 sq m. These comprise surplus sites, former probation offices, former prison officer housing and a former prison.

These properties are held pending disposal either on the open market or to other Government Departments.

Departmental Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of the staff employed by his Department have a declared disability. [205795]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of staff who have a declared disability. The latest information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website and the following address:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/disability_apr04_4nov04.xls

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women there are in senior positions in his Department. [205796]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Cabinet Office collects and publishes annually statistical information on the civil service by Department. These include data on the number of women in senior positions in Departments and on the number of staff who have a declare disability.

The latest available information at April 2004 is available in the Library and on the civil service website and the following addresses:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/publications/xls/gender_apr04_4nov04.xls

Domestic Burglary

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the detection rates for domestic burglary in the Greater London area were in each of the last three years. [209256]

Ms Blears: The clear up rate for domestic burglary offences recorded in the Greater London region was nine per cent. in 2001–02,12 per cent. in 2002–03 and 10 per cent. in 2003–04.

EC Legislation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* transfer to qualified majority voting and *(b)* UK participation in the items listed in Council Decision 2004/927/EC, OJ L396 of 31 December 2004; and by what mechanism Parliament is notified of such changes in legislative mechanism. [211381]

Mr. Browne: The information is as follows:

(a) The Council Decision provides for certain areas covered by Title IV of Part Three of the treaty establishing the European Community to be governed by the procedure referred to in Article 251 of the treaty. That procedure provides for qualified majority voting in the Council and the application of the co-decision procedure in the European Parliament. The move to QMV and co- decision is not new. The treaty of Amsterdam, in force since 1999, provided that five years after its entry into force, member states would take a unanimous decision to move some or all immigration and asylum measures to QMV and co-decision. Within the Nice treaty, in force since 2003, member states adopted a declaration slightly amending the Amsterdam arrangements. The move to QMV and co-decision for asylum measures became automatic, once common rules and basic principles had been agreed. Member states reaffirmed that they would endeavour to move remaining immigration measures, or parts of them, to QMV and co-decision from 1 May 2004 or as soon as possible thereafter.

(b) The Government supported the move to qualified majority voting because EU co-operation on asylum and immigration issues over the last five years has been valuable to the UK and we are keen to see measures in this area adopted without the delays experienced under unanimous voting in a Council of 25 member states. The Council decision has no effect on the UK's Title IV protocol, negotiated at Amsterdam. We will continue to be able to opt-in to immigration and asylum measures which are in the UK's interest. The decision also does not affect the UK's frontiers protocol, which allows us to maintain our own border controls.

(c) Parliament is notified of developments in EU legislation via correspondence between the lead Government Department and the European Scrutiny Committees in the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The draft Council Decision, along with an explanatory memorandum, was deposited in Parliament on 15 November 2004. A subsequent addendum to the draft Council Decision was submitted on 25 November. The Council Decision was debated in European Standing Committee B on 13 December. Both Committees cleared the document from scrutiny during December. The decision took effect on 1 January 2005 having been adopted on 22 December 2004.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Council Decision 2004/926/EC of 22 December 2004; and when this proposed change to UK treaty obligations was reported to Parliament. [211382]

Caroline Flint: Following Council Decision 2004/926/EC, the UK has now commenced the judicial co-operation, drugs co-operation, obligations on carriers, measures to combat trafficking of human beings and police co-operation parts of the Schengen acquis. The UK will now formally be able to benefit from enhanced police and judicial co-operation powers with Schengen partners.

The UK's application to participate (8562/99) was deposited in Parliament as was the draft Council Decision on the UK's participation. The legislative basis for participation in these provisions was included in the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003. Following a successful evaluation, the Council Decision on the partial participation in Schengen was adopted on 22 December 2004 and came into force on 1 January 2005. I informed the House following the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting on 2 December 2004 that the Council Decision on the application of parts of the provisions of the Schengen acquis to the UK would soon be ready for adoption, by way of a written answer on 15 December 2004.

Emergency Response Vehicles

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many emergency response vehicles are available to police forces. [209750]

Ms Blears: This information is not held centrally. Decisions regarding the procurement and use of vehicles are operational matters and are the responsibility of the chief constable and the police authority.

Ethnic Minorities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent to which the policies of his Department meet the needs of ethnic minorities. [205794]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office's Race Equality Scheme, which was first published in 2002, sets out how the Home Office meets its obligations under the revised Race Relations Act. It includes our commitment to assess the impact of our policies and services on minority ethnic communities. Assessments of new policies are produced and published individually; for example, the assessment relating to the Identity Cards Bill was published recently. Both the scheme and individual assessments are available on the Home Office web site. On 19 January 2005 a consultation on updating the scheme was published.

Gun Crimes

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many gun crimes there have been in the Avon and Somerset police authority in each year since 1997. [212012]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is given in the table. Avon and Somerset adopted the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in October 2000 ahead of national implementation in April 2002. Figures from 2000–01 onwards may have been affected by this.

Firearms offences (excluding air weapons) recorded by the police in Avon and Somerset

	Number of offences
1997–98	65
1998–99	71
1999–2000	103
2000–01	101
2001–02	131
2002–03	119
2003–04	123

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to *(a)* the Connecting Communities Network, *(b)* the Civil Justice Council, *(c)* the Criminal Justice Integration Unit, *(d)* crime reduction partnerships, *(e)* each of the regional crime reduction teams, *(f)* the drug action teams, *(g)* the Criminal Records Bureau and *(h)* the Frank Drugs Campaign in each of the last two years; and how many staff each organisation employed in each year. [201725]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) The Department does not recognise the term "Connecting Communities Network", but the budget for the Connecting Communities Grant programme was £4.695 million in the financial year 2003–04, rising to £5.908 million in 2004–05. The number of Home Office staff employed full-time on administering this grant was five in 2003–04, and one and a half in 2004–05.

(b) The Civil Justice Council (CJC) is funded by the Department for Constitutional Affairs. The CJC's budget was £205,000 in the financial year 2003–04, rising to £214,000 in 2004–05. The number of staff in post (full-time equivalents) at 31 March 2004 was 3.1 and at 30 November 2004 was 4.1 (excluding the administrative head of the CJC, as he has split responsibilities and is funded by the Master of the Rolls).

(c) As the term "Criminal Justice Integration Unit" is unfamiliar, this question cannot be answered.

(d) The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP), although having statutory functions, are not organisations in their own right and it is not possible to quantify the staff employed. CDRPs are "virtual" partnerships, reliant upon the individual partners for the quality and quantity of resource available to them. Their work is largely co-ordinated by staff employed by local authorities, supplemented by seconded, or dedicated, police officers and officers from other Responsible Authorities.

(e) The budgets for, and number of staff employed by, the regional crime reduction teams at the 10 Government Office for the Regions is given in the following table.

	2003–04		*2004–05*	
Region	*Budget £000*	*Staff employed*	*Budget £000*	*Staff employed*
NE	677	13.5	679	14
NW	997	20.5	999	21
Yorks and Humber	832	17.5	834	18
West Midlands	980	20	982	20.5
East Midlands	919	18.5	921	19
East Midlands	790	15.5	793	16
SE	815	16.5	817	17
SW	890	18.5	893	19
London	1,278	25.5	1,280	26
Wales	626	14.8	654	16.8
Total	8,804	180.8	8,852	187.3

Note:
With regard to Wales, the budget shown here includes the Crime Reduction Director's Salary, and the number of staff employed in 2004–05 includes one Business Crime Adviser.

The Crime Reduction Teams in the Government Offices for the Regions include drugs teams, partnership advisors, youth crime workers and street crime workers, among others. Not all of the staff within the team have their costs covered by the Home Office. The Regional Coordination Unit in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has responsibility for the staffing of the Government Offices and the Welsh Assembly Government has responsibility for the Crime Reduction Team in Wales. The Home Office holds details only of the number of staff employed in the teams at the end of July 2004, which was then 448.

(f) Drug Action Teams (DAT) were established in 1995 and are accountable to the Home Secretary. They are local partnerships charged with responsibility for delivering the National Drugs Strategy at a local level; with representatives from the local authority (education, social services, housing), health, police, probation, the prison service and the voluntary sector.

The 149 DATs in England receive an allocation from the Partnership Support Grant to support delivery of the Drugs Strategy. The Partnership Support Grant was formed in 2004–05 from the merger of two previous funding streams, the Drug Action Team Development Grant and the Drug Action Team Communities Against Drugs Grant. The budget for each of the financial years 2003–04 and 2004–05 was £11.3 million.

No information is held centrally about the number of staff employed by the 149 DATs.

(g) The budget allocated to the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) in the financial year 2003–04 was £22.8 million, comprising £8 million from the Home Office, £7.4 million from the Department for Education and Skills and £7.4 million from the Department of Health. In that year the CRB employed 380 staff.

The CRB's budget for 2004–05 is £8.1 million, comprising £2.7 million from the Home Office, £3.4 million from the Department for Education and Skills and £2 million from the Department of Health.

(h) The Frank Review report published on 25 November 2004 states that in the first set up year (2003–04) a total of £3.743 million was spent on advertising media funded by the Home Office and Department of Health. The marketing and advertising budget for the financial year 2004–05 is £3 million, funded equally by the Home Office and the Department of Health.

Frank is not an organisation so has no staff.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to *(a)* The National Centre for Policing Excellence, *(b)* the National Refugee Integration Forum, *(c)* each of the multi-agency public protection arrangements panels, *(d)* the Community Cohesion Unit, *(e)* each of the regional asset recovery teams, *(f)* each of the street crime courts and *(g)* the Country Information Unit in each of the last two years; and how many staff each organisation employed in each year. [201730]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) the National Centre for Policing Excellence:

Financial year 2003–04: £16.4million (comprising £3 million from the Home Office and £13.4 million through CENTREX[1] and training income). 355 staff.

Financial year 2004–05: £21.9 million (comprising £5 million from the Home Office, £7.7 million from training income and £9.2 million from CENTREX[1]). 354 staff.

[1] CENTREX is the trading name of the Central Police Training and Development Authority.

(b) The budget for the National Refugee Integration Forum in each of the last two financial years, 2003–04 and 2004–05, was £0.4 million. No staff are employed solely to run this Forum.

(c) In the last two years there has been no specific central funding for the operation or staffing of the 42 multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements Panels.

(d) The budget for Community Cohesion Unit in the financial year 2003–04 was £4.762 million, when 34 staff were employed. For the financial year 2004–05 the figures are £5.273 million and 21 respectively.

(e) The budget for, and staff employed by, the four Regional Asset Recovery Teams was:

	Financial year 2003–04		*Financial year 2004–05*	
	£ million	*Staff*	*£ million*	*Staff*
Wales	0.673	25	1.459	32
NE	0.718	27	1.510	29
NW	0.955	12	1.244	34
London	0.519	22	1.821	29
Total	2.865	86	6.034	124

The Teams were not operational until part-way through 2003–04.

(f) At the start of the Street Crime Initiative, in April 2002, 67 (later increased to 70) courts in the 10 Street Crime Force Areas were designated specialist street crime courts to give priority to street crime cases. They have not received any Home Office funding in the last two years, nor have they received, from the Department for Constitutional Affairs, any additional funding for extra sitting days arising from the Street Crime Initiative. No extra staff have been employed at these courts as a result of the Initiative.

(g) The Country Information and Policy Unit (CIPU) had 27 staff in the financial year 2003–04 and 30 staff in 2004–05. It is part of the Home Office's Asylum and Appeals Policy Directorate. Its costs are met from within the overall resource budget of the Immigration and Nationality Department.

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget was allocated to the *(a)* Dedicated Cheque and Plastic Crime Unit, *(b)* Persistent Offenders Taskforce and *(c)* Asylum Decision Service Unit in each of the last two years; and how many staff were employed by each. [201891]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) The Dedicated Cheque & Plastic Crime Unit had a budget of £0.823 million in the financial year 2003–04, and employed 28 staff. In the current financial year, 2004–05, it still has 28 staff but it has no government-funded budget—the Unit is now fully funded by the banking industry.

(b) There is no Persistent Offenders "Taskforce", but the budget for the Persistent Offenders Scheme was £5.355 million (of which £0.175 million was resource and £5.18 million capital) in the financial year 2003–4, when it employed 3.5 staff.

In 2004–5 the Scheme's budget is £2.960 million (of which £0.120 million is resource and £2.84 million is capital). There are just 2 Home Office staff.

(c) The Asylum Decision Service Unit does not have its own dedicated budget or staff.

Knives

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences were recorded in which a knife was used within the Greater London area in each of the last five years. [209925]

Ms Blears: This information is not collected centrally. The number of offences involving knives are not separated out in the recorded crime statistics.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of those convicted of offences of *(a)* driving without insurance, *(b)* driving without a licence and *(c)* driving after the refusal or revocation of a licence were fined (i) less than 20 per cent., (ii) between 20 and 40 per cent., (iii) between 40 and 60 per cent., (iv) between 60 and 80 per cent. and (v) more than 80 per cent. of the maximum penalty; and what percentage were (A) disqualified immediately, (B) disqualified under the totting-up procedure, (C) awarded up to three points, (D) awarded between four and six points and (E) awarded in excess of six points in the last period for which information is available. [210074]

Ms Blears: The available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on convictions, fines and disqualifications for specific motoring offences 2002 (latest available) is given in the table.

Data for 2003 will be available in March 2005.

Driving licence endorsements and disqualification imposed at all courts for specific motoring offences, England and Wales 2002

Offence type	Total findings of guilt (= 100%)	Endorsements without disqualification		Total disqualifications[1]	
		Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
(a) driving without insurance Using motor vehicle uninsured against third party risk (RTA88 S143(2))	289,100	219,100	76	53,000	18
(b) driving without a licence Driving or causing or permitting another person to drive other than in accordance with a licence (full or provisional) (RTA88 S87(1) and (2) as amended)	171,300	147,300	85	800	0
(c) driving after the refusal or revocation of a licence Driving while disqualified from holding or obtaining a licence (RTA88 S103(1))	48,500	25,100	52	18,200	38
Driving after false declaration as to physical illness; driving after failing to declare; driving after refusal or revocation[2] (RTA88 SS92–94 as amended)	60	44	73	1	2

[1] Does not include persons disqualified by the courts under S35 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988 (penalty points system/totting-up). S35 statistics relate to persons only and cannot be attributed to a specific offence.

[2] Cannot separately identify driving after refusal and revocation from the two other offences within the category (part of the same sub classification code)

0 = Less than 0.5 per cent.

Muslim Prison Population

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the Muslim prison population in England and Wales is, broken down by *(a)* sex, *(b)* nationality and *(c)* ethnicity; [199893]

(2) what the Muslim prison population was on 1 November in each of the past five years for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* ethnicity, *(b)* nationality and *(c)* sex. [199894]

Paul Goggins: The requested information for 31 October in each year from 2000 to 2004, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, is provided in the tables.

Population of Muslim prisoners, by gender—England and Wales, 31 October

	Male	Female
2000	4,551	102
2001	4,867	113
2002	5,767	130
2003	6,132	133
2004	6,758	146

Population of Muslim prisoners, by nationality—England and Wales, 31 October

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
All	4,653	4,980	5,897	6,265	6,904
United Kingdom	3,066	3,308	3,837	3,889	4,375
Africa					
Algeria	92	93	129	136	135
Angola	0	0	0	2	3
Benin	2	1	0	0	1
Botswana	0	0	0	0	1
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	0	1
Burundi	0	0	1	0	1
Cameroon United Republic	0	1	1	1	2
Central African Republic	0	5	2	2	1
Chad	0	0	1	3	1
Congo	0	2	2	5	4
Congo, Democratic Republic of	3	1	5	3	7
Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	2	5	3	1	6
Djibouti	0	1	0	0	0
Egypt	8	12	8	11	14
Ethiopia	5	4	2	3	2
Gabon	1	0	0	0	1
Gambia	16	14	10	22	32
Ghana	7	10	9	12	15
Guinea	2	0	0	1	8
Kenya	9	12	17	21	14
Liberia	1	2	1	6	8
Libya	9	14	14	16	15
Malawi	2	2	1	3	3
Mali	0	0	1	2	0
Mauritania	1	0	0	0	0
Mauritius	2	4	2	4	1
Mayotte	0	1	1	0	0
Morocco	35	39	33	38	36
Mozambique	1	0	0	1	1
Namibia	0	0	0	1	0
Niger	0	0	0	0	1
Nigeria	32	40	36	44	74
Rwanda	0	0	1	1	1
Senegal	0	2	2	2	2
Seychelles	1	0	0	0	0
Sierre Leone	9	8	21	25	27
Somalia	121	109	168	168	212
South Africa	12	12	15	12	10
Sudan	3	3	4	31	16
Tanzania	3	7	6	5	9
Togo	1	0	1	0	0
Tunisia	3	2	6	5	14
Uganda	6	9	14	18	19
Zambia	1	2	2	1	4
Zimbabwe	1	1	1	4	3
Asia					
Bangladesh	108	110	124	137	135
Bhutan	0	0	0	1	1
China	0	0	0	1	1
Hong Kong	0	1	0	0	0
India	34	35	38	39	35
Indonesia	0	1	1	2	1
Malaysia	0	0	0	0	1
Myanmar, Union of (Burma)	0	0	0	1	0
Pakistan	291	306	361	354	348
Sri Lanka	5	4	8	16	11
Surinam	2	1	1	2	2
Vietnam	0	0	1	1	0
Central/South America					
Argentina	0	0	1	0	1
Belize	0	0	0	0	1

Population of Muslim prisoners, by nationality—England and Wales, 31 October

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Bolivia	1	0	1	2	0
Brazil	0	1	0	0	5
Columbia	1	2	1	0	0
Ecuador	0	0	0	1	0
Venezuela	0	0	0	2	1
Europe					
Albania	37	35	48	42	56
Andorra	1	1	1	1	1
Armenia	0	1	0	1	2
Austria	0	0	0	1	0
Azerbaijan	0	1	0	0	0
Belgium	4	3	2	0	2
Bosnia-Hercegovina	2	3	4	1	2
Bulgaria	1	1	1	0	0
Croatia	1	1	0	0	0
Cyprus	57	49	45	41	38
Czech Republic	0	0	—	1	0
Denmark	2	3	2	4	3
France	18	21	29	34	35
Germany	3	0	3	8	8
Greece	2	0	1	1	0
Irish Republic	5	7	5	6	6
Italy	3	4	2	6	13
Kazakhstan	1	1	2	0	0
Kyrgystan	0	0	0	1	2
Lithuania	0	1	2	3	0
Macedonia	0	0	1	2	2
Netherlands	17	22	42	35	24
Norway	0	0	1	0	2
Portugal	4	1	6	4	5
Romania	3	1	1	0	5
Russia	3	4	3	9	13
San Marino	0	0	1	0	0
Serbia and Montenegro	43	41	68	48	51
Slovenia	0	0	0	1	0
Spain	4	3	4	6	5
Sweden	0	0	1	2	3
Turkey	168	178	174	225	199
Turkmenistan	1	0	3	1	0
Uzbekistan	0	0	0	1	0
Middle East					
Afghanistan	27	16	32	62	59
Bahrain	0	0	0	1	1
Iran	39	37	57	60	86
Iraq	33	26	81	128	185
Israel	3	2	3	6	7
Jordan	6	4	3	5	8
Kuwait	5	2	1	3	6
Lebanon	7	15	9	18	16
Qatar	0	0	1	0	0
Republic of Yemen	1	5	6	8	9
Saudi Arabia	5	3	6	3	5
Syrian Arab Republic	5	6	6	7	10
United Arab Emirates	4	2	4	7	5
North America					
Canada	2	3	2	1	4
United States of America	9	9	8	11	8
Oceania					
Australia	0	0	1	0	1
Fiji	0	0	0	0	2
Samoa	0	0	0	0	1
Soloman Islands	1	1	0	0	1
Other	0	1	1	3	0
West Indies					
Anguilla	0	0	0	1	0
Aruba	3	3	0	0	0
Bahamas	0	0	1	2	1
Barbados	2	2	2	3	5
Dominica	0	0	2	0	0
Dominican Republic	0	1	1	1	0
Grenada	2	1	1	2	1
Guyana	2	4	2	2	4
Jamaica	98	120	145	162	166
Montserrat	0	0	0	1	0
Netherlands Antilles	3	4	3	3	2
St Christopher and Nevis	0	0	1	0	0
St Kitts and Nevis	1	1	1	1	1
St Lucia	4	4	3	2	0
St Vincent & The Grenadines	2	1	1	0	1
Trinidad and Tobago	5	9	6	11	16
Virgin Islands	1	1	2	1	0
Not recorded	110	133	162	205	195

Population of Muslim prisoners, by ethnicity[1]—England and Wales, 31 October

	2000	*2001*	*2002*
White	536	605	727
Black	1,598	1,667	1,889
South Asian	1,283	1,425	1,708
Chinese and other	1,232	1,276	1,570
Unrecorded	5	7	3

[1] Information is not available for October 2003 or October 2004

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the business case for the National Offender Management Information Project. [199998]

Paul Goggins: The business case for the National Offender Management Information Project is not yet completed. It is expected to be agreed in July 2005. No decision has been taken on publication.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish *(a)* the Business Case, *(b)* the Gateway Review and *(c)* the Risk Assessment of the National Offender Management Service. [208683]

Paul Goggins: A request for all three items of information has been received under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. That request is now being considered and, if the documents are released under the Act, I will consider whether they should also be published.

OASys System

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the original deadlines for connecting the prison and probation services' OASys IT systems have been met. [199895]

Paul Goggins: Roll out of the probation and prison OASys IT systems has gone well. The prison service completed its roll out by the end of 2004 and all probation areas have been using OASys IT since last summer. However our plans to connect the two systems are behind schedule.

We decided that it made sense, first, to pilot a limited version of the software that would provide the connection between the two systems, with full deployment of the final version of the software to follow at a later date. At the beginning of 2004 our aim was to begin the pilot in July and have the final version ready for deployment in September, with a view to completing roll out across the probation service and prison service around the end of 2004.

The pilot began in July as planned, linking one probation area to several prisons. However the effort needed to develop and support the pilot was greater than expected, which delayed completion of the final version of the software until the end of November. The final version is now in use across the prison service and in the pilot probation area.

Plans for roll out across the rest of the probation service have been put back in order to give priority to work that will enable OASys to support implementation of the sentencing provisions of the 2003 Criminal Justice Act in April. We now expect to achieve full connectivity between the prison and probation OASys IT systems by autumn 2005.

Offending Behaviour Courses

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what expenditure he expects to be incurred by the Prison Service in providing faith-based offending behaviour courses in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [206880]

Paul Goggins: Details of the expenditure incurred by the Prison Service in supporting faith-based offending behaviour courses are not held centrally.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason it was not possible to respond to the question tabled on 26 October by the hon. Member for Clydesdale concerning the Justice and Home Affairs Council meeting of 25 to 26 October before Prorogation. [202523]

Fiona Mactaggart: Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible. A drafting error meant that my hon. Friend's question answer was referred back for amendment, but unfortunately the corrected version was still in draft at Prorogation. I am sorry a substantive response was not provided. Where right hon. and hon. Members did not receive a substantive response it is open to them to re-table their question this session.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the question tabled on 3 December 2004, by the hon. Member for New Forest, East, ref. 203298, asking how many departmental files have been destroyed in each of the past five years. [208330]

Fiona Mactaggart: I replied to the hon. Member on 2 February 2005.

Peter Sutcliffe

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors he took into consideration before his decision to allow Peter Sutcliffe to visit Arnside in Cumbria on 17 January; and what costs were incurred in *(a)* preparing for and *(b)* undertaking that visit by (i) Cumbria Constabulary, (ii) Broadmoor and (iii) other public bodies. [211310]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 27 January 2005]*: In considering any leave of a restricted patient from a secure hospital on compassionate grounds, the Secretary of State makes a thorough assessment of any risks to the safety of others and the strength of the compassionate grounds. He also takes into account the potential distress to victims or victims' families.

The costs of preparing for the visit can be provided only at disproportionate cost. On the day of the visit four staff were used from Broadmoor at an approximate cost of £1,800 as well as two police officers from Cumbria Constabulary at an approximate cost of £450.

Police Cells (London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners were being held in police cells at police stations in the Greater London area on the latest date for which figures are available. [210314]

Paul Goggins: Information recorded on the Prison Service Central IT system states that, as at 21 January 2005, there were no prisoners being held in police cells in the Greater London area.

Police Training

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects on the fitness of police cadets of the shortening of the basic training period; and if he will make a statement. [203020]

Ms Blears: The reduction in the length of Stage 2 of police probationer training from 15 weeks to 12 has taken place within the context of discussions with Centrex over their budget for 2004–05. Representatives of Centrex, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and force training managers considered the length of Stage 2 in detail and concluded that 12 weeks should be sufficient to deliver a comprehensive probationer training programme.

In restructuring Stage 2, some elements, such as drill work and passing out parades, were removed. The approach of the modernised programme is to encourage student officers to take on increased personal responsibility for development, in particular their fitness. This philosophy should help to raise the long-term fitness of student officers, and help them maintain good fitness levels throughout their police careers.

There is no specific fitness assessment during Stage 2. However, candidates are required to pass a fitness test as part of the recruitment process.

Press Officers

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent by his Department on press officers in each of the past eight years, broken down by grade. [203517]

Fiona Mactaggart: Press officers within the Home Office are employed at the Information Officer (IO) and

Senior Information Officer (SIO) grades, the costs of these staff for the years requested are as follows:

£

Grade	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000
IO	239,400	212,010	185,022	210,040
SIO	129,600	119,990	143,978	132,960
Total	369,000	332,000	329,000	345,000

£

Grade	2000–01[1]	2001–02[2]	2002–03	2003–04
IO	500,475	711,629	1,141,990	1,229,629
SIO	362,525	288,371	560,192	670,371
Total	863,000	1,000,000	1,700,000	1,900,000

[1] Expansion of the Home Office press office followed an external consultant's review of its staffing and operation in 1999 and recommended the creation of the "Newsdesk" so as to better meet the demands of the media. This improved efficiency from losing in excess of 20 per cent. of the calls pre-expansion, to a position where from June 2003 to June 2004 91.8 per cent. of the 67,070 press calls received by the Newsdesk were answered.

[2] The Home Office press office and the prison service press office merged in May 2001

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* the running costs for each establishment or prison in the Prison Service and *(b)* the average number of prisoners held at that establishment in each of the last three financial years for which figures are available. [201031]

Paul Goggins: The following table provides information for financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 relating to Prison Service running costs for each establishment along with the average number of prisoners held at that establishment. Data on contracted prisons for 2003–04, which transferred to the National Offender Management Service that year, is not held centrally.

	Population			Net expenditure (£)		
Sector/ Establishment	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Contracted out prisons						
Altcourse	826	981	996	30,595,377.96	32,154,593.40	Not available
Ashfield	377	267	278	12,542,676.96	9,820,998.72	Not available
Doncaster	1,079	1,122	1,110	18,369,239.04	19,252,815.48	Not available
Dovegate	—	754	849	—	24,511,441.56	Not available
Forest Bank	840	1,011	1,004	19,522,323.96	20,821,813.20	Not available
Lowdham Grange	495	518	522	12,694,649.04	13,159,648.80	Not available
Parc	894	975	980	28,811,957.04	31,322,995.44	Not available
Ry[illegible] Hill	591	656	656	14,567,327.04	14,103,265.80	Not available
Wolds	399	381	344	8,642,517.96	8,504,900.40	Not available
Contracted out prisons total	5,500	6,664	6,740	145,746,036.00	173,652,472.80	Not available
Public prisons						
Acklington	748	771	852	12,306,950.52	13,054,220.63	15,788,472.93
Albany	441	440	506	9,638,823.72	10,214,991.77	10,898,755.41
Ashwell	395	494	529	7,977,358.68	8,886,441.91	9,820,621.63
Askham Grange	125	129	125	2,802,067.92	3,010,141.59	3,504,485.35
Aylesbury	346	348	346	10,900,370.64	11,665,888.85	12,479,819.51
Bedford	414	459	476	8,449,673.64	9,496,198.32	10,592,949.56
Belmarsh	845	874	890	30,948,620.04	31,517,398.69	35,243,300.73
Birmingham	842	920	1,144	16,696,491.24	18,407,049.27	26,001,933.35
Blakenhurst	838	864	875	9,672,423.96	12,205,742.38	14,323,009.16
Blantyre House	117	119	120	2,490,331.56	2,610,224.12	2,804,446.76
Blundeston	415	430	457	9,982,610.40	10,665,340.96	11,696,407.12
Brinsford	451	457	455	12,069,795.12	13,067,319.60	14,719,849.89
Bristol	574	603	586	17,134,205.04	17,726,083.52	17,527,369.32
Brixton	757	781	795	19,503,710.64	19,738,369.57	20,145,741.42
Brockhill	154	157	146	5,643,992.64	6,545,909.88	7,177,765.87
Buckley Hall	327	252	299	6,696,946.20	8,002,424.25	8,754,832.76
Bullingdon	889	923	946	15,178,113.72	16,450,924.62	18,905,326.43
Bullwood Hall	167	169	154	5,623,915.92	6,735,862.20	7,537,890.15
Camp Hill	525	536	565	10,096,506.48	10,773,949.96	11,650,349.42
Canterbury	286	302	297	6,268,130.16	6,718,208.85	6,905,821.51
Cardiff	643	664	670	13,370,996.16	14,263,885.93	15,517,951.68
Castington	296	326	274	11,168,009.76	12,033,756.12	13,481,139.10
Channings Wood	588	613	635	11,238,889.44	12,381,003.81	13,442,288.38
Chelmsford	467	564	573	11,573,580.12	12,872,923.29	13,939,441.66
Coldingley	364	378	386	7,909,234.44	8,151,903.19	9,128,148.67
Cookham Wood	147	129	133	3,576,877.56	3,973,515.48	4,523,752.59
Dartmoor	600	613	607	14,631,698.16	14,952,728.64	15,438,615.31
Deerbolt	405	446	447	9,711,053.16	10,672,539.93	12,815,868.22
Dorchester	241	245	235	5,726,271.96	6,397,175.71	6,958,360.69
Dover	200	180	286	6,728,429.04	7,531,998.94	8,535,930.83
Downview	201	226	211	7,158,939.72	8,572,194.48	9,514,316.75
Drake Hall	230	261	289	5,694,213.12	6,516,051.23	7,472,584.80
Durham	698	706	707	22,559,478.60	23,777,699.87	25,058,947.41
East Sutton Park	93	90	95	2,198,632.20	2,663,044.75	2,573,575.67
Eastwood Park	314	296	282	7,352,499.84	8,042,491.32	9,913,081.09
Edmunds Hill	—	—	236	—	—	10,166,109.34

	Population			*Net expenditure (£)*		
Sector Establishment	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Elmley	917	962	978	15,151,352.64	16,103,052.04	16,341,014.54
Erlestoke	319	351	410	6,191,129.88	6,908,721.70	8,121,058.84
Everthorpe	432	372	444	7,959,428.16	8,302,402.15	9,197,297.31
Exeter	479	505	522	10,282,668.96	11,607,391.18	12,234,022.00
Featherstone	588	607	612	12,549,693.24	13,097,561.68	13,682,193.96
Feltham	650	657	654	24,346,836.72	30,914,847.84	34,739,708.34
Ford	411	497	507	6,271,677.84	7,235,484.88	7,751,286.18
Foston Hall	193	216	221	5,299,241.16	6,045,225.42	6,578,212.21
Frankland	638	649	652	24,550,210.44	26,165,446.85	29,118,141.90
Full Sutton	591	601	604	23,541,026.40	24,773,246.12	26,386,702.21
Garth	613	649	649	12,879,053.64	13,576,682.98	14,617,993.19
Gartree	282	281	337	8,886,522.36	8,907,621.83	10,526,747.60
Glen Parva	768	776	768	16,615,880.04	17,838,628.16	18,973,060.82
Gloucester	287	313	299	7,417,887.96	7,925,896.84	8,838,003.52
Grendon	446	464	540	11,293,397.88	11,834,437.62	14,095,176.72
Guys Marsh	509	529	557	8,103,303.12	8,984,586.08	10,274,248.73
Haslar	146	131	133	2,847,597.84	3,430,225.55	4,184,600.54
Hatfield	169	—	—	4,116,131.64	—	—
Haverigg	537	544	553	9,638,718.96	9,846,312.95	11,207,603.76
Hewell Grange	168	182	169	3,018,642.24	3,073,260.46	3,647,648.31
High Down	708	724	733	17,266,744.08	18,620,299.16	18,342,968.39
Highpoint	841	872	739	16,860,130.56	18,628,778.69	13,421,205.82
Hindley	447	507	504	13,429,475.64	17,104,335.36	18,631,028.63
Hollesley Bay	335	424	306	12,625,347.24	14,900,729.52	6,936,001.18
Holloway	486	481	467	20,210,798.28	24,950,875.19	24,503,392.74
Holme House	938	978	979	16,789,327.68	18,220,248.23	19,642,584.13
Hull	575	793	1,022	13,824,391.20	17,551,047.22	21,767,681.07
Huntercombe	326	346	321	9,984,811.92	12,126,322.68	13,683,794.82
Kingston	182	187	161	4,748,471.40	5,133,177.30	5,263,066.42
Kirkham	479	482	526	10,642,725.24	11,292,356.57	11,834,765.33
Kirklevington	172	181	217	2,806,220.04	3,088,563.53	3,739,040.74
Lancaster	226	237	237	5,718,901.92	6,137,630.11	6,560,738.78
Lancaster Farms	499	478	465	11,715,332.64	13,087,838.64	15,402,635.01
Latchmere House	171	188	193	3,052,466.28	3,419,175.01	3,795,789.14
Leeds	1,234	1,244	1,246	23,291,510.28	24,161,348.29	25,793,017.19
Leicester	342	362	380	8,204,348.52	8,402,449.99	9,321,911.08
Lewes	461	510	498	9,985,425.36	10,262,873.21	12,151,241.46
Leyhill	380	425	499	8,585,072.76	9,761,621.43	10,238,610.72
Lincoln	514	452	462	11,655,840.96	13,468,972.50	14,168,125.75
Lindholme	617	724	710	15,386,512.44	16,782,005.24	17,181,143.31
Littlehey	623	651	665	10,376,196.60	10,532,340.96	11,569,348.39
Liverpool	1,349	1,444	1,438	25,565,331.96	26,779,122.44	29,081,192.62
Long Lartin	424	430	432	20,122,537.08	20,297,348.70	21,759,326.69
Low Newton	275	275	282	7,547,572.32	8,027,668.08	9,530,830.99
Maidstone	377	500	536	10,405,356.96	11,094,821.30	11,439,739.14
Manchester	1,171	1,253	1,251	26,037,370.92	25,453,776.37	28,452,774.07
Moorland	765	951	994	15,006,469.20	20,902,463.22	22,199,672.57
Morton Hall	177	251	332	4,821,306.72	6,514,374.75	8,265,011.48
Mount	728	754	757	11,565,509.04	12,808,539.13	14,103,646.46
New Hall	362	348	361	10,405,366.68	11,888,471.16	14,575,158.86
North Sea Camp	193	266	290	3,738,139.20	4,446,814.25	4,615,384.87
Northallerton	194	201	208	5,080,144.68	5,273,815.17	5,974,078.68
Norwich	726	743	721	14,164,850.88	15,229,088.10	16,123,860.07
Nottingham	501	530	534	10,413,671.88	11,178,581.58	12,353,040.22
Onley	549	519	478	13,504,210.68	14,770,000.32	15,865,977.56
Parkhurst	437	506	494	12,434,863.32	13,259,482.25	14,777,152.73
Pentonville	1,162	1,203	1,198	22,239,322.68	25,047,520.66	26,329,862.41
Portland	472	436	446	11,313,800.76	11,106,772.04	12,553,777.06
Preston	554	642	664	13,192,099.20	14,005,563.36	15,197,436.21
Ranby	729	752	799	12,851,506.44	14,269,727.16	16,128,715.73
Reading	236	263	261	6,761,178.24	7,080,270.26	8,495,683.52
Risley	801	897	1,055	16,393,280.64	18,221,820.84	20,722,667.32
Rochester	246	162	201	8,790,555.00	8,601,058.97	8,694,797.84
Send	216	215	215	4,609,306.68	4,973,567.22	6,074,953.68
Shepton Mallet	164	186	185	4,833,093.96	4,990,998.51	5,630,387.49
Shrewsbury	330	333	338	6,518,034.48	7,340,718.66	7,848,804.29
Stafford	618	630	637	10,624,650.96	12,305,293.98	13,225,249.88
Standford Hill	346	392	426	7,308,028.08	8,107,637.60	8,436,240.40
Stocken	573	577	616	9,454,465.68	10,199,202.65	11,221,790.97
Stoke Heath	522	629	619	13,554,911.40	15,705,333.36	17,394,795.84
Styal	429	432	424	10,894,273.08	11,529,555.22	13,371,178.18
Sudbury	500	506	539	7,606,310.04	7,700,778.95	8,599,753.54
Swaleside	752	769	771	13,493,143.08	13,776,387.74	14,746,329.49
Swansea	260	362	345	7,511,932.80	8,219,127.67	8,988,411.86
Swinfen Hall	312	313	313	7,445,593.56	7,860,939.19	8,609,410.44
Thorn Cross	219	208	208	7,359,860.52	7,370,209.08	8,081,102.35

Sector/ Establishment	*Population* 2001-02			*Net expenditure (£)* 2001-02		
	2001-02	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*
Usk	324	328	392	6,805,526.40	7,171,809.47	7,951,779.91
Verne	567	581	581	9,534,353.28	10,002,289.72	10,343,170.14
Wakefield	558	570	563	19,914,098.64	20,955,508.28	21,875,455.42
Wandsworth	1,358	1,457	1,456	25,450,136.28	27,936,163.70	30,949,360.95
Warren Hill			173	—		9,486,155.64
Wayland	628	659	697	9,928,884.72	10,818,403.22	11,602,260.06
Wealstun	604	587	596	10,870,433.88	11,659,314.42	13,663,459.73
Weare	377	384	376	7,340,015.76	7,920,458.28	8,463,373.99
Wellingborough	503	520	519	9,133,033.92	9,306,368.67	10,427,925.20
Werrington	121	130	123	5,058,624.60	5,820,566.88	6,360,411.15
Wetherby	325	343	303	8,594,400.24	10,161,472.32	11,743,631.06
Whatton	270	290	352	4,877,527.56	5,783,698.75	7,021,856.40
Whitemoor	398	419	418	22,611,768.72	24,138,778.64	24,942,489.37
Winchester	581	618	626	11,907,739.32	13,206,336.78	14,938,932.21
Woodhill	674	754	772	22,103,665.08	23,631,596.83	26,427,000.19
Wormwood Scrubs	1,021	1,214	1,214	23,256,552.00	24,691,189.11	28,870,884.65
Wymott	790	810	841	14,929,816.44	15,501,819.76	17,605,372.62
Public prisons total	61,605	64,834	66,939	1,434,675,919.32	1,559,542,249.00	1,721,563,785.45
Prison system total	67,105	71,498	73,679	1,580,421,955.32	1,733,194,722.36	1,721,563,785.45

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of the *(a)* performance and *(b)* market testing programmes for each establishment within HM Prison Service where they have been run or are ongoing for each year of operation of the programmes. [209400]

Paul Goggins: The amounts provided by the Prison Service for establishments to develop in-house bids are given in the table. Information on market test bids for Manchester and Buckley Hall in 1992 and 1994 respectively is not available. The figures in the table do not include any additional resources contributed from within establishments' own budgets. The market test and performance testing processes have proved extremely effective with successful bids leading to significant improvements in performance and value for money in establishments.

	Competition/ Establishment	In-house bid team funding (£)
	Performance test	
2002	Leicester	244,000
2002	Reading	270,000
2003	Dartmoor	230,000
2003	Liverpool	230,000
2003	Bullingdon	230,000
2003	Eastwood Park	230,000
2004	Hindley	200,000
2004	Wandsworth	200,000
	Market test	
2001	Brixton	305,000
2001	Wolds	328,500
2000	Manchester	400,000
2000	Blakenhurst	400,000
1999	Doncaster	230,000
1999	Buckley Hall	230,000

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many investigations are being conducted by the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman into self-inflicted deaths in prisons in England and Wales; how many staff are involved in conducting these investigations; and of those staff, how many have been appointed from outside the Prison Service. [201066]

Paul Goggins: Investigation of all deaths in custody (whether apparently self- inflicted or otherwise) became the responsibility of the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman on 1 April 2004. Since that date, investigations have begun into 186 deaths in prisons, immigration detention and probation approved premises. This includes 74 apparently self-inflicted deaths in prison.

The Fatal Incident Investigation Team within the Ombudsman's office comprises 22 people, 16 of whom were recruited from outside the Prison Service. The Ombudsman hopes to make further appointments.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what meetings the Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service has held with which private company interested in running prisons and the probation service in England and Wales; [199980]

(2) what discussions he has held with which companies about bidding for the running of young offender institutions in England and Wales. [199982]

Paul Goggins: No Home Office Minister has had discussions with any companies about bidding for the running of prisons, including young offender institutions.

The Chief Executive of the National Offender Management Service regularly meets with the four companies currently operating prisons (Global Solutions Ltd., Premier Prison Services Ltd., Securicor Justice Services Ltd. and UK Detention Services Ltd.). He has also met Cornell and Geo Group.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 344W, on prisons, what the agreed overcrowding limit is for each of the private finance initiative prisons; and what penalties have been imposed on each prison for exceeding its overcrowding limit in the last three years. [210173]

Paul Goggins: As of 19 January 2005 the agreed Operational Capacity (maximum level of permitted overcrowding) for each of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) prisons was as follows:

Establishment	*Operational Capacity*	*Prison type*
HMP and YOI Altcourse	903	Male local prison
HMYOI Ashfield	360	Male juvenile prison
HMP Bronzefield	451	Female local and training prison
HMP Dovegate	660	Male category B training prison
HMP and YOI Forest Bank	1,040	Male local prison
HMP Lowdham Grange	524	Male category B training prison
HMP and YOI Parc	1,036	Male local prison
HMP Rye Hill	664	Male category B training prison

There is no facility for any contracted prison to exceed its agreed overcrowding limit as prisoners are re-directed once that point is reached. There have therefore been no penalties awarded for excessive overcrowding.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at *(a)* Elmley prison and *(b)* Swaleside prison have been reclassified from category C to category D in each year since 1997. [209863]

Paul Goggins: Figures for the number of prisoners recategorised from category C to category D are available only from November 1999 onwards for Elmley prison and from 2004 for Swaleside prison.

These are shown in the following table.

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[1]
Elmley	84	169	155	108	150	5
Swaleside	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	18	1
Total	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	168	6

[1] To date.

[2] Figures not recorded.

Private Mario Clarke

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are assigned to the investigation into the death of Private Mario Clarke in Hackney on 26 December 2002; what steps have been taken to maintain contact of a family liaison officer with Private Clarke's widow, subsequent to her deportation to Jamaica; what steps have been taken to establish an inquest into the death; and whether public funds will be made available to Deveen Clarke to attend the inquest. [208865]

Ms Blears: The investigation into the murder of Private Mario Clarke is being conducted by a Murder Investigation Team (MIT) from the Metropolitan Police Trident team. The MIT's strength is that of a normal MIT with one Detective Chief Inspector, three Detective Inspectors five, Detective Sergeants and 23 Detective Constables and support staff. Private Clarke's widow Deveen has been contacted in Jamaica by the Family liaison officers directly and in addition through other members of the family when her movements made communications difficult. An inquest into the murder was held on the 22 September 2004 by the coroner Mr Reid. The result was a verdict of unlawful killing. The Met have indicated that as Deveen Clarke did not attend the inquest it was not necessary to make public funds available.

Publications

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on *(a)* preparation, *(b)* publication and *(c)* delivery of "The Sharp End" magazine. [210012]

Ms Blears: "The Sharp End" magazine is for frontline police officers, Community Support Officers and police staff. It aims to inform them about changes which are making a difference to their working lives. The Government have a duty to explain how its policies impact on this key audience, and our research shows they would welcome it.

The Sharp End complements the local information police officers receive from their Chief Constables and other sources. The first issue included articles on new antisocial behaviour powers, best practice on cutting burglary, preserving scenes of crime and using new techniques such as automatic number plate recognition, the introduction of new equipment such as non-lethal weapons ('tasers') and how officers can stay fit for their job.

Total costs for the magazine this financial year have been £588,604.94 which is broken down as follows:

(a) Preparation: £140,769.99—this covered the research phase including production of a test issue of the magazine

(b) Publication: £251,397.00—this covers the design, production and printing of three issues of the magazine

(c) Distribution: £196,437.95—this covers direct mailing of sample magazines to forces, distribution of three issues of the magazine, subscription list building and order fulfilment. These costs relate largely to the launch and set up of the magazine and therefore will reduce considerably next financial year.

This represents good value for ensuring that all frontline police have information about issues affecting their working lives.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many contracts were awarded by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible to small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2001–02; and what the total value of those contracts was in each year. [207008]

Fiona Mactaggart: The available information held by the Home Office is as follows.

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
(a) The Department			
Number of contracts awarded to SMEs	335	58	429
Total value of contracts awarded to SMEs (£)	12,701,653	121,111,670	57,245,818
(b) Agencies for which the Department is responsible			
Number of contracts awarded to SMEs	0	13,580	2,240
Total value of contracts awarded to SMEs (£)	0	84,812,702	54,420,403

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many research and development procurement opportunities were disseminated by the Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative in each year since 2001–02, to date; and what the value of such opportunities was in each case. [207013]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office does not hold a central record of the number or value of research and development procurement opportunities that were disseminated by the Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative in each financial year since 2001–02. To obtain this information would incur disproportionate costs.

Sex Attacks

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the percentage of drug assisted sex attacks that go unreported; [199964]

(2) what plans he has to fund a campaign in the run-up to the Christmas party season to alert women to the dangers of leaving drinks unattended; [199966]

(3) what assessment he has made of the prevalence of *(a)* drink spiking and *(b)* drug rape following drink spiking. [199967]

Paul Goggins: The recorded crime information collected centrally and held on the Home Office Court Proceedings, does not allow the separate identification of rapes involving drugs.

Results obtained by the Forensic Science Service from a study involving 1,014 cases of claimed drug facilitated sexual assault between 2000 and 2002 showed that:

> 2 per cent. of such cases were due to a deliberate administration of drugs intended to disinhibit the victim.
>
> Alcohol was detected in 81 per cent. of cases where samples were taken soon enough to be able to detect it.

Findings from the 2001 BCS Inter-Personal Violence Module found that in 5 per cent. of rape cases since age 16, victims said that they were drugged in some way. The BCS IPV module also suggests that only 15 per cent. of victims of serious sexual assault report it to the police.

In November 2004 the Association of Chief Police Officers launched Operation Matisse, a six-month study which will assess the extent of drink spiking and sexual assault in seven police force areas. It is the first co-ordinated study on drug-facilitated sexual assault, and will provide valuable information on which effective action to tackle this particularly sinister crime can be based.

The Government did not fund a campaign specifically to warn against drink-spiking in the run-up to Christmas. We believe that the consumption of alcohol, whether intentional or unsolicited, is a bigger factor than drugs in sexual assault, and we intend to focus awareness raising work on this issue, as part of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme for England.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of sex offenders committed suicide in *(a)* overcrowded and *(b)* non-overcrowded prisons in each of the last five years. [199511]

Paul Goggins: The information requested with respect to individuals in prison charged with, convicted of or sentenced for sexual offences is provided in the following table.

	Number who apparently took their own lives	*Number who apparently took their own lives that were in prisons operating over their CNA*[1]	*Percentage*	*Number who apparently took their own lives that were in prisons operating under their CNA*	*Percentage*
2000	8	7	88	1	12
2001	7	5	71	2	29
2002	8	8	100	0	0
2003	9	8	89	1	11
2004	5	3	60	2	40

[1] Certified Normal Accommodation. This is the uncrowded capacity of an establishment (after adjusting for accommodation out of use), that is to say with no prisoners sharing two to a cell certified for one. Though the holding prisons were, at the time of the prisoners' deaths, operating over their respective CNAs, this does not necessarily mean that the prisoners who died were accommodated in 'overcrowded' conditions, for example, one of two prisoners accommodated in a cell designed for one.

Special Constables

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average age is of serving special constables, broken down by police force area. [210015]

Ms Blears: Information on the average age of special constables is not collected centrally. However, information is collected showing the number of specials by age group. The available data for 31 March 2004 are given in the table.

Age of special constables as at 31 March 2004

	Under 25 years	*26 to 40 years*	*41 to 55 years*	*Over 55 years*
Avon and Somerset	52	163	77	13
Bedfordshire	31	87	25	3
Cambridgeshire	26	120	44	3
Cheshire	27	95	40	11
Cleveland	18	39	22	6
Cumbria	5	42	30	0
Derbyshire	81	154	58	8
Devon and Cornwall	86	311	179	26
Dorset	32	107	64	7
Durham	18	48	13	2
Dyfed-Powys	22	76	41	12
Essex	45	181	111	12
Gloucestershire	24	87	39	5
Greater Manchester	100	182	55	8
Gwent	33	66	32	5
Hampshire	76	169	87	14
Hertfordshire	64	95	40	7
Humberside	41	110	53	5
Kent	99	147	79	16
Lancashire	91	158	73	14
Leicestershire	38	74	42	5
Lincolnshire	39	73	34	10
London, City of	11	32	6	5
Merseyside	112	211	46	2
Metropolitan Police	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Norfolk	45	118	62	16
Northamptonshire	51	99	44	3
Northumbria	36	77	51	5
North Wales	26	66	32	0
North Yorkshire	15	77	59	9
Nottinghamshire	50	152	78	15
South Wales	44	114	57	3
South Yorkshire	57	92	44	7
Staffordshire	89	183	91	13
Suffolk	42	136	80	8
Surrey	59	136	52	8
Sussex	42	85	41	13
Thames Valley	77	166	86	12
Warwickshire	27	92	41	9
West Mercia	40	137	86	17
West Midlands	208	372	128	7
West Yorkshire	84	234	80	5
Wiltshire	51	85	31	2
Total	2,214	5,248	2,433	351

n/a = Not available.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average tenure is of serving special constables, broken down by *(a)* year of entry and *(b)* police force area. [210016]

Ms Blears: The information is not collected centrally. However, information is collected on the length of service of Special Constables when leaving. The latest available data are given in the following table.

Special constables—length of service on leaving in 2003–04

	6 months and under	*6 months to 2 years*	*2 to 5 years*	*5 to 10 years*	*Over 10 years*
Avon and Somerset	6	41	33	9	15
Bedfordshire	4	0	4	4	1
Cambridgeshire	1	15	15	6	7
Cheshire	0	1	3	2	0
Cleveland	1	4	5	4	2
Cumbria	3	0	6	7	9
Derbyshire	1	9	10	6	9
Devon and Cornwall	4	13	28	37	19
Dorset	0	9	9	13	6
Durham	0	3	6	7	5
Dyfed-Powys	1	0	4	3	0
Essex	1	27	22	23	12
Gloucestershire	1	2	5	8	4
Greater Manchester	1	34	17	20	7
Gwent	2	5	2	5	3
Hampshire	3	31	24	17	8
Hertfordshire	4	22	8	8	5
Humberside	0	13	2	3	2
Kent	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lancashire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Leicestershire	4	6	7	10	4
Lincolnshire	2	8	4	5	3
London, City of	1	4	1	4	0
Merseyside	1	8	15	13	3
Metropolitan Police	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Norfolk	0	13	11	11	3
Northamptonshire	4	10	6	17	6
Northumbria	0	8	20	17	20
North Wales	0	2	0	2	4
North Yorkshire	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nottinghamshire	0	2	3	2	4
South Wales	1	10	8	9	3
South Yorkshire	2	16	12	5	5
Staffordshire	3	24	14	16	20
Suffolk	1	23	17	15	8
Surrey	0	12	8	2	6
Sussex	1	6	13	9	14
Thames Valley	8	10	19	24	26
Warwickshire	1	3	11	5	17
West Mercia	3	6	9	11	9

Special constables—length of service on leaving in 2003–04

	6 months and under	6 months to 2 years	2 to 5 years	5 to 10 years	Over 10 years
West Midlands	2	0	53	33	46
West Yorkshire	2	14	8	6	3
Wiltshire	3	17	14	5	2
Total	72	431	456	403	320

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much it cost *(a)* to train a special constable and *(b)* to maintain a special constable for a year of service in the last period for which figures are available. [210020]

Ms Blears: This information is not collected centrally.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209574]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information about the total spend on recruitment advertising for the Home Office, including the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, for the financial years 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 is shown in the table.

Spend on advertising (£)

	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Home Office (non-IND)	826,056	513,269	344,047
Immigration and Nationality Directorate	519,610	413,829	352,158
Total	1,345,666	927,098	696,205

Suffolk Police (Recorded Offences)

Mr. Spring: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences have been recorded by the Suffolk police force in each year since 1995, broken down by category. [209265]

Ms Blears: The information requested in the given in the following tables.

Table 1: Offences recorded by the police in Suffolk 1995 to 2001–02

Number of offences

Period	Total	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Burglary
1995	38,233	2,050	357	129	7,114
1996	37,094	2,136	351	156	6,384
1997	35,639	2,448	400	141	6,094
1998–99[1, 2]	39,908	3,820	405	140	6,241
1999–2000	43,355	5,303	389	223	6,214
2000–01	44,317	6,395	421	177	5,738
2001–02	50,492	7,354	486	289	6,346

Period	Theft and handling stolen goods	Fraud and forgery	Criminal damage	Drug offences[1]	Other offences
1995	19,282	1,243	7,359	356	343
1996	18,134	1,333	7,965	301	334
1997	16,952	1,116	7,835	333	320
1998–99[1, 2]	17,097	2,099	7,898	1,581	627
1999–2000	17,422	2,182	9,547	1,410	665
2000–01	17,196	2,372	10,150	1,178	690
2001–02	19,419	2,428	12,095	1,292	783

[1] Figures for 1995–97 cover trafficking in controlled drugs only. From 1998–99 onwards, they also include possession and other drug offences.

[2] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and revised counting rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.

Note:

The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Offences recorded by the police in Suffolk 2002–03 to 2003–04

Number of offences

Period	Total	Violence against the person	Sexual offences	Robbery	Burglary
2002–03	50,315	7,949	588	249	6,248
2003–04	53,443	9,529	641	290	6,396

Period	Theft and handling stolen goods	Fraud and forgery	Criminal damage	Drug offences	Other offences
2002–03	18,806	2,418	11,497	1,689	871
2003–04	18,205	2,725	12,817	1,923	917

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years

Unlawful Killings

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many verdicts of unlawful killing have been returned by coroners' courts since the House of Lords Judgment in R *v.* HM Coroner for the Western District of Somerset and another ex-parte Middledon (2004); if he will list the cases in chronological order; which deaths resulted in or are expected to lead to prosecutions; and which Government department has primary responsibility for assessing the implications of the verdict and initiating action as necessary. [200489]

Paul Goggins: Information on verdicts is not held centrally on a month by month basis. The 2004 data will be published in spring 2005 but will not give the details of individual cases.

Following a verdict at the coroners court of unlawful killing, the matter may be brought to the attention of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Where the matter had not previously been referred by police to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the CPS would liaise with the police and review any evidence in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors.

Where the CPS had previously reviewed the evidence and decided that in accordance with the Code there was insufficient evidence or that it was not in the public interest to prosecute, the CPS would reconsider its decision having regard to the coroner's verdict and any new evidence brought to their attention.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211334]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office Welsh Language Scheme was given the full endorsement of the Welsh Language Board on 14 January 2002.

The Department does abide by the principles of the 1993 Welsh Language Act and seeks to ensure that it makes Welsh language versions of published materials available whenever appropriate.

Young Offenders

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* girls and *(b)* boys under 18 were (i) held on remand and (ii) serving a custodial sentence in each prison service establishment in England and Wales on 1 November. [199536]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 29 November 2004]*: The requested information, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system, for 31 October 2004 is provided in the following tables.

Population of persons aged under 18 on remand in prison establishments, by gender and establishment England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Male	*Female*
Ashfield	34	0
Brinsford	42	0
Castington	22	0
Eastwood Park	0	1
Forest Bank	1	0
Feltham	161	0
Hindley	41	0
Holloway	0	5
Lancaster Farms	29	0
New Hall	0	6
Parc	18	0
Stoke Heath	54	0
Woodhill	1	0
Warren Hill	34	0
Werrington	1	0
Wetherby	57	0

Population of persons aged under 18 under sentence in prison establishments, by gender and establishment England and Wales, 31 October 2004

	Male	*Female*
Ashfield	210	0
Brinsford	148	0
Bullwood Hall	0	20
Castington	114	0
Eastwood Park	0	7
Feltham	109	0
Huntercombe	276	0
Hindley	120	0
Holloway	0	1
Lancaster Farms	161	0
New Hall	0	28
Parc	1	0
Stoke Heath	119	0
Thorn Cross	35	0
Warren Hill	148	0
Werrington	127	0
Wetherby	236	0

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in improving women's rights in Afghanistan. [211279]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds) on 11 October 2004, *Official Report*, columns 209–10W.

Through the Global Opportunities Fund the Foreign and Commonwealth Office continues to support an ActionAid project promoting Afghan women's participation in governance—£80,000 in Financial Year 2004–05. And the UK Bar Human Rights Committee project of human rights training for legal practitioners with a specific focus on women's rights—£240,000 over three years.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will press the United States authorities to disclose the circumstances of the death of an Afghan at a detention site near Asadabad, in Kunar province, Afghanistan; whether any UK forces have been based at this detention site; and if he will make a statement. [211389]

Mr. Rammell: We have raised with the US on a number of occasions our concerns about the alleged maltreatment of detainees in Afghanistan. We continue to press the US for further information on its detention policy and facilities there.

No UK forces have been based at Asadabad.

Alex Boncayao Brigade

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the activities of the Alex Boncayao Brigade since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211445]

Mr. Alexander: The Philippine authorities have stated that the Alex Boncayao Brigade have disbanded. We agree with this assessment, although we are aware that individual members may still be responsible for violent activity in the Philippines. We will continue to monitor this situation.

British Detainees

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British *(a)* men and *(b)* women are being held in prisons in foreign countries, broken down by country. [209923]

Mr. Alexander: On 30 June 2004 there were 2,275 British men and 268 British women detained overseas. A breakdown of this information is available in the Library of the House.

Burma

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what inquiries he has made of the Government of Burma about the internally displaced people in Shweygyn Township. [209772]

Mr. Alexander: We have not made representations to the State Peace and Development Council about this specific case.

We are doing everything we can to press the Burmese authorities to begin a genuine process of reform involving all political parties and ethnic groups in Burma. A genuine transition to democracy is essential to address the underlying reasons for the displacement of people in Burma.

The UK co-sponsored the UN General Assembly resolution of 23 December which condemned human rights violations suffered by ethnic groups in Burma. The Resolution called on the regime to "end the policy of systematic enforced displacement of persons and other policies leading to displacement within Myanmar and refugee flows to neighbouring countries, to provide the necessary protection and assistance to internally displaced persons and to respect the right of refugees to voluntary, safe and dignified return monitored by appropriate international agencies."

China

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons his Department supports the lifting of the EU arms embargo on China. [210470]

Mr. Rammell: The Government supported the December 2003 European Council decision to review the EU's arms embargo on China, imposed in view of circumstances in 1989. At that time there was no EU Code of Conduct, under which most refusals for arms exports from the EU to China are now made.

As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said on 12 January 2005 to the Quadripartite Committee, the Government could envisage embargo lift subject to satisfaction on the issues laid out in the European Council Conclusions of December 2004. This included the statement that

> "the result of any decision should not be an increase of arms exports from EU member states to China, neither in quantitative nor in qualitative terms."

Until the review process is complete, the Government continues to implement the Arms Embargo as set out by the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply on 3 June 1998, *Official Report,* columns 240–41.to my hon. Friend the Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker)

Corporal Punishment

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether corporal punishment of children has been prohibited by legislation in each of the UK overseas territories *(a)* as a sentence of the courts and as a form of punishment in penal institutions for young offenders, *(b)* in schools, including private schools, *(c)* in other institutions and forms of care and *(d)* by parents in the home. [208164]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* Judicial corporal punishment has been abolished throughout the Overseas Territories. The position on corporal punishment in schools, other institutions and the home is as follows:

Anguilla:

Corporal punishment and hard labour in penal institutions have been abolished. Under the Education Act, corporal punishment is allowed in schools under controlled conditions. Corporal punishment of children in the home is allowed under common law.

Bermuda:

The Abolition of Capital and Corporal Punishment Act (1999) abolished the use of corporal punishment on young offenders. There is no prohibition on corporal punishment in schools. Corporal punishment may not be carried out on any child in care, be it in a Children's Home or foster care. There is no prohibition on corporal punishment in the home.

British Indian Ocean Territory:

Although there are no children or other juveniles in the Territory, under British Indian Ocean Territory law, corporal punishment is not permitted under any circumstances.

British Virgin Islands:

Corporal punishment (including that of young offenders) is not permitted in prisons. In schools, corporal punishment can be carried out by the principal, deputy principal or by one senior teacher appointed in writing. Corporal punishment of children is not allowed in other institutions or forms of care. Corporal punishment of children is allowed within the home.

Cayman Islands:

Corporal punishment (including that of young offenders) is not allowed by law in the prison system. Corporal punishment is allowed by law in all public and private schools in the Cayman Islands, only where no other punishment is considered suitable or effective by the principal, and may only be administered by the principal or any teacher appointed in writing by the principal for that purpose. An entry must be made in a punishment book kept in each school. The corporal punishment of children is allowed within the home. However, where there is excessive punishment of children, the parent(s) may be prosecuted for assault.

Falkland Islands:

Corporal punishment of all prisoners (including young offenders) in the prison system is prohibited by law. Corporal punishment is also prohibited by law in public sector schools. There is no prohibition on corporal punishment in private sector schools (of which there are none in the Territory), in other forms of care, or by carers. However, administratively, the Falkland Islands Government forbids corporal punishment of children in the forms of care it operates. There is no prohibition on corporal punishment in the home.

Gibraltar:

Corporal punishment is not administered in prison. In both public and private educational establishments, and other institutions which care for children and young people, corporal punishment is not permitted. Although corporal punishment in the home is not expressly forbidden by law, any such punishment must be proportionate, and there have been cases in which parents have been convicted for disproportionate punishment.

Montserrat:

Corporal punishment is not permitted for young offenders, or in schools or other institutions or forms of care for children. There are no laws to prohibit corporal punishment in the home.

Pitcairn Islands:

Corporal punishment of prisoners below the age of majority is not allowed by law within the mainstream prison system. Corporal punishment is not permitted in schools or other institutions or forms of care for children. Striking or using force against a child for the purpose of discipline or punishment is prohibited by law.

St. Helena and Dependencies:

Corporal punishment of young offenders is not allowed by law within the prison system. Corporal punishment of children is not permitted in schools, other institutions or forms of care, or in the home.

Sovereign Base Areas (SBAs) of Akrotiri and Dhekelia in Cyprus:

Corporal punishment in penal institutions for young offenders is prohibited. The applicable SBA legislation governing the education of non-service children does not prohibit corporal punishment in schools. However, the education of non-service children in the SBAs is carried out on behalf of the SBA Administration by the Republic of Cyprus, whose law does not permit corporal punishment. Although this law does not have any legal status in the SBAs, the teachers in such schools are likely to consider themselves bound to follow the Republican Law when working in the SBA, and would not use corporal punishment. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) was only recently extended to the SBAs, and the Administration is currently auditing its laws to amend those which are incompatible with the ECHR. As part of this review, laws on education will be amended so that they are in line with those of the Republic of Cyprus: this law, once in place, will prohibit corporal punishment in schools in the SBAs. The law is expected to be enacted by May of this year. Corporal punishment in other institutions and forms of care is not expressly prohibited. This field of work is carried out on behalf of the SBA Administration by the Republic of Cyprus. At present Cyprus law, in common with existing legislation in the SBA, permits corporal punishment by those with custody of children. However, a new law under consideration in Cyprus would prohibit corporal punishment entirely. In practice, the authorities in Cyprus do not permit any form of corporal punishment to be imposed in institutions caring for children. Corporal punishment in the home is not expressly prohibited but is allowed to the extent of reasonable chastisement.

Turks and Caicos Islands:

Corporal punishment of juvenile prisoners is not allowed by law. Corporal punishment is permitted in schools, provided that it is not administered in a manner which is degrading or injurious. The same laws which apply to schools would also apply to other institutions. There are however no juvenile institutions other than schools in the Territory. Corporal punishment of children in the home is permitted, provided it does not go beyond reasonable chastisement.

British Antarctic Territory; South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands:

These Territories have no settled population.

Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the case of Linda Orams and the extent to which judgments of the civil courts in Cyprus are enforceable in the United Kingdom. [211277]

Mr. MacShane: It would be inappropriate to comment on the Orams' case while legal proceedings are in progress and the outcome is uncertain. The Government is of course following developments closely.

Through our travel advice, website www.fco.gov.uk and in response to queries, we explain the unique circumstances in Cyprus and strongly advise potential purchasers of property to seek independent qualified legal advice. We also explain that the non-recognition of the "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus" and the possibility of a future political settlement in Cyprus could have significant practical or financial implications for those considering buying property in the north.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on lighting in each year since 1997. [205867]

Mr. Alexander: Figures for spending, by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, on lighting in each year since 1997 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Egypt

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Government of Egypt regarding the kidnapping of Egyptian Christian girls and women for forced conversion to Islam; and if he will make a statement. [210985]

Mr. Rammell: Our embassy in Cairo took part in a joint demarche with our EU partners in December 2004 on issues of difficulty faced by converts in obtaining ID cards. As part of that demarche, our embassy also raised the issue of religious persecution, with particular reference to the alleged case of abduction of a Coptic Priest's wife in Beheira.

The British Government are committed to promoting tolerance and mutual respect between religions. Although the majority of people in Egypt are Muslim, there is a large Christian minority who are free to practise their own religion. We are aware that there are isolated incidents of violence against the Coptic Christian community in Egypt and where appropriate, along with EU partners and others, we raise our concerns about these incidents with the Egyptian authorities. We also discuss these incidents with the Coptic Church in Egypt.

EU Fraud

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he made during negotiations on the European Constitution on *(a)* combating fraud and *(b)* whistleblowing; and if he will make a statement on his policy towards implementing European Convention document 844/03, Systems of Mismanagement, as a basis for reform of the anti-fraud system. [211354]

Mr. MacShane: 85 per cent. of the EU budget is spent and distributed by Ministries of EU member states who are responsible for accusations of fraud. The Government have taken a lead in urging the Commission to put in place mechanisms to expose fraud and during discussions in the convention and negotiations for the new treaty insisted that the Treaty preserves existing arrangements for tackling fraud and protecting whistle-blowers, including Eurojust, the Court of Auditors, and instruments such as the European Communities Staff Regulations, as amended in May 2004, which provide that an official shall not suffer any prejudicial effects from making a disclosure in accordance with the Regulations. The Government are not making further comments on the numerous papers submitted by organisations and individuals to the secretariat of the convention.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the European Commission on the combating of fraud within the institutions. [211357]

Mr. MacShane: The Government frequently encourages the Commission and other member states, in line with their Treaty obligations, to take effective anti-fraud measures to protect the EU budgets.

As the hon. Member will know, the European Court of Auditors checks the EU accounts each year. Its Report for 2003, as in previous years, found that the accounts

> "faithfully reflect the revenue and expenditure of the Communities for this financial year".

The Court again found "irregularities" in the accounts, which prevented it from certifying the accounts completely. However the Court noted that 80 per cent. of the irregularities relate to accounting practices in some member states including the UK, not in those of the Commission, and also emphasised that the irregularities do not reflect the level of fraud.

Moreover, the Commission this year plans to implement an ambitious programme of reform, which we believe will bring its accounting practice up to the highest international standards.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the European Commission on the fair treatment of whistleblowers within the European Community institutions. [211359]

Mr. MacShane: As I informed the hon. Member in my written answers of 10 and 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 13W and 643W, the Government believe that a measure of protection should be offered to employees making such disclosures in good faith. We therefore took an active part in formulating the European Communities Staff Regulations, of May 2004, which provide that an official shall not suffer any prejudicial effects from making a disclosure in accordance with the Regulations. We consider this a comparable measure of protection to that enjoyed by UK officials in Crown Service.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the cases being investigated by OLAF pertaining to illegal exports to Iraq referred to on page 125 of the Court of Auditors annual report for 2003. [211375]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The European Court of Auditors cannot provide a greater level of specific information to the outside world than is provided in its adopted reports. This is in order to protect the professional relationship between auditor and auditee. It would also be inappropriate to comment until OLAF have completed their investigations.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1020–21W, on the European Constitution, if he will publish the minutes of meetings held with European Commission officials pertaining to the provision of information relating to the constitutional treaty for the European Union. [211429]

Mr. MacShane: It is not our practice to publish the content of private discussions between UK officials and officials from international organisations.

Iran

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the UK's policy is on Iran. [210586]

Mr. Rammell: Our policy towards Iran, like that of the European Union, is one of constructive but critical engagement. We maintain a robust dialogue on issues of concern such as Iran's nuclear programme, human rights record, approach to the fight against terrorism and attitude towards the Middle East Peace Process. Where possible we aim to support reform in Iran.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his *(a)* European Union and *(b)* US counterparts with regard to the negotiation of a new Trade and Co-operation Agreement with Iran; and if he will make a statement. [210792]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed the European Union's approach to the draft EU/Iran Trade and Co-operation Agreement (TCA) with his EU counterparts on many occasions, including at the General Affairs and External Relations Council meetings on 22 November and 13 December 2004. He often discusses policy towards Iran with US interlocutors.

Iraq

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to assist the interim Iraqi Government in encouraging the Sunni minority to participate in the forthcoming elections in Iraq. [209034]

Mr. Rammell: Throughout the transitional period we have worked closely with the Iraqi Interim Government, and a wide cross-section of Iraqis, to encourage the broadest participation in the elections. Officials met regularly with representatives from all Iraq's communities. We have also encouraged countries in the region to use their influence to highlight the benefits to all Iraqis of participation in the elections.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many weapons of mass destruction Iraq possessed at the time of the 2003 invasion. [210590]

Mr. MacShane: As my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said publicly, the Government acknowledge and accept the conclusion of the Iraq survey group that Iraq did not possess stockpiles of Weapons of Mass Destruction at the time of the recent conflict.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many coalition forces are operating in Iraq; and what changes are planned over the next two years. [210591]

Mr. Rammell: About 30 nations currently contribute around 175,000 troop to the UN-mandated Multi-National Force in Iraq (MNF-I). UK and US contributions have been augmented over the election period. The MNF works closely with the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). As the capacity and capability of the ISF improves, the need for MNF support will gradually decrease. Several MNF-I partners have time-bound mandates: some of these may be renewed, other countries may prefer to switch their focus to, for example, the NATO Training Mission.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking *(a)* to encourage a satisfactory outcome to the strike by Basra rail workers and *(b)* to seek the safe return of the kidnapped rail workers. [210829]

Mr. Rammell: Our consulate in Basra is investigating media reports of a strike by Basra rail workers. However, this is a matter for the Iraqi Interim Government. The kidnappings of rail workers is deplorable. I strongly condemn these horrific attacks which target those Iraqis who are working hard for their country. Such attacks are aimed at depriving the Iraqi people of the peaceful and democratic future they deserve.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he *(a)* has had and *(b)* plans to have with the Interim Iraqi Government on the subject of the recent abuse suffered by Iraqi trade unionists, with particular reference to trade unionists in the Basra area. [210830]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him today (UIN 210829). We have asked our consulate in Basra to pursue these reports with the Iraqi authorities.

The Government attaches importance to developing trade unions and civil society. The transitional administrative law makes provision for the right of all Iraqis to join unions. At least 12 national trade unions have already been established. We are working with the Department for International Development on capacity building of Iraqi trade unions through their Civil Society Fund together with Unison and the International Centre for Trade Union Rights.

Middle East

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what modifications to the route of the separation barrier between Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory have been made following his representations to the Israeli Government. [210506]

Mr. Rammell: The Israeli government has said it will revise the route of the barrier. This follows a decision by the Israeli High Court on 30 June 2004 and considerable international concern about the impact of the barrier on the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The new route has yet to be published. In the meantime, we continue to express our view that the barrier construction in the Occupied Territories is illegal and damages the prospects of a peaceful settlement based on a two-state solution.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the effect of the election of a new Palestinian leader on his Department's policy on Israel and Palestine. [210587]

Mr. Rammell: We welcome the success of the recent Palestinian presidential elections, and congratulate President Abu Mazen. Our policy, as made clear during my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's visit to Washington on 11–12 November 2004, has been: to support Palestinian presidential elections; to help the Palestinians improve their infrastructure; to support Prime Minister Sharon's disengagement plan and to help both parties implement the Roadmap, to achieve a two-state solution and a comprehensive and just settlement. We hope that President Abu Mazen's victory with a strong majority will provide an opportunity to move the Middle East Peace Process forward.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Israeli Government concerning the expansion of settlements in the Occupied Territories. [210507]

Mr. Rammell: We have had frequent discussions with Israel regarding the issue of settlement expansion. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean have made clear to the Israeli Government our view that settlements are illegal under international law. The Roadmap requires that Israel freeze settlement expansion and dismantle outposts erected since March 2001.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Israeli Government concerning new roads in the Occupied Territories which can only be used by Israeli settlers. [210508]

Mr. Rammell: We oppose the construction of new roads in the Occupied Territories which can only be used by Israeli settlers. Construction of such roads, and wider settlement expansion, is illegal. We continue to make representations to the Israeli Government to this effect.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Israeli Government concerning funding for the proposed cross border industrial zones. [210509]

Mr. Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed cross border industrial zones with the Israeli Government during his visit to Israel in November 2004. We favour the development of industrial zones which could benefit the economies of both Israel and the Palestinians.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Israeli Government concerning a port and an airport for the Gaza Strip. [210510]

Mr. Rammell: During their recent visits to Israel, my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary set out the importance of successful disengagement. A port and airport in the Gaza strip will be a crucial element in the economic development of a viable Palestinian state. We continue, both bilaterally and with the international community, to engage with Israel to stress the importance of Israel enabling such facilities to be developed.

Milliyetci Hareket Partisi

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the activities of the Milliyetci Hareket Partisi since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211448]

Mr. MacShane: The Milliyetci Hareket Partisi (MHP) is a far-right nationalist party that currently holds no seats in the Turkish Parliament. An ANAR poll published on 18 January 2005 suggests that support for the MHP is still below the 10 per cent. threshold required for a party to enter parliament. Their attempts to block the passage of key EU harmonisation legislation on the death penalty and minority language rights when they were part of the previous coalition government was a matter of concern. The MHP has been particularly vehement in its rejection of any kind of cultural rights for the Kurds. The MHP was recently in the news when a crowd of its supporters disrupted a Greek Orthodox religious ceremony in Istanbul on 6 January 2005.

Moro Islamic Liberation Front

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the activities of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211444]

Mr. Alexander: We welcome the reduction in violence in Mindanao that has accompanied the ceasefire, adopted by the Philippine Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in July 2003.

We are pleased at the resumption of the peace process. We have consistently urged both sides to work towards a lasting solution to the conflict and that this can only be achieved through peaceful negotiation.

Nicaragua

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the UN-brokered Nicaraguan agreement regarding the position of President Enrique Bolaños and the Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega. [210790]

Mr. Rammell: We welcome the agreement signed on 12 January between the President and main Congressional parties, which has established a new forum for national dialogue in Nicaragua and permits President Bolaños to complete his term of office. We hope that a new spirit of cooperation will allow the Government to focus on the pressing needs of the Nicaraguan people. We will continue to monitor the situation closely together with our EU partners and the rest of the donor community.

Peru

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of accusations of torture and killing levelled at the Administration of President Alberto Fujimori in Peru; and if he will make a statement. [210720]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made an independent assessment of the accusations of crimes committed by the Peruvian Government during President Fujimori's period in office. Our information is based on the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), published in August 2003. The TRC investigated the process of violence of political origin experienced in Peru between 1980 and 2000. According to the report

> "the TRC has reasonable grounds to affirm that President Alberto Fujimori, his adviser Vladimiro Montesinos, and high level officials of the National Intelligence Service are criminally responsible for the assassinations, forced disappearances and massacres perpetrated by the "Colina" death squad".

Vladimiro Montesinos is currently incarcerated in Peru, awaiting a trial against him for the alleged crimes above. Alberto Fujimori is currently in Japan and has been since 2000. The Peruvian Government are seeking his extradition to face the charges detailed above.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the number of people allegedly *(a)* detained, *(b)* tortured and *(c)* executed by (i) the Sendero Luminoso, (ii) Movimento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru and (iii) the security forces of Peru during the 1980s and 1990s; and if he will make a statement. [210724]

Mr. Rammell: We have not made an independent assessment of the number of people affected by the internal conflict in Peru during the 1980s and 1990s. Our information is based on the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission published in August 2003. The TRC estimates (with a 5 per cent. margin of error) that the most probable number of victims who died in the violence is 69,280. Of these, Sendero Luminoso was responsible for 54 per cent. and the Movimento Revolucionario Tupac Amaru 1.5 per cent. and the remainder due to the Armed Forces, Police and Self-Defence Committees.

We have actively supported the efforts of the TRC. This support has helped develop institutional capacity within this Commission in the regions most affected by the violence. The Peruvian authorities are now in the process of implementing the TRC's recommendations. We are currently supporting the work of the Human Rights Ombudsman's Office and the National Co-ordinator for Human Rights in this aim.

Safe Countries

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place between Her Majesty's Government and the European Union on assembling a new list of safe countries. [213182]

Mr. Alexander: Discussion of the EU safe country list has been postponed until after the adoption of the proposal for a Council directive on minimum standards on procedures in member states for granting and withdrawing refugee status. We await the outcome of consultation with the European Parliament on this directive.

Stationery

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department has spent on stationery in each of the last seven years. [210580]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office spent £1,345,639.51 on stationery in financial year 2004–05. This was made up as follows:

desktop stationery £573,794.80;

computer consumables £338,146.38;

and magnetic media £251,171 and paper £182,526.36.

The information requested for the six years prior to 2004–05 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tsunami Relief

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other assistance is offered by the Government to the families of British citizens who have died in the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster. [210944]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has put in place an assistance package which is available to the families of British citizens who have died in the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster.

The package may contain any of the following elements depending on the case:

Repatriation of bodies or mortal remains to country of choice (via the FCO's approved company).

Return luggage costs of those who have died (usually personal effects).

Death certificates.

Travel Assistance for families:

Return business class airfares to the airport nearest the site of the incident for two members of the victim's family

Local travel in-country

Accommodation in-country for five nights

Travel insurance

Longer-term assistance for families:

Assistance with psychological support services

FCO officials and UK police personnel are working with the relevant local authorities to identify and repatriate the bodies of British victims of the tsunami as quickly as possible. Over 300 police family liaison officers have been assigned to bereaved families.

UK Overseas Territories

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit UK Overseas Territories during the next 12 months. [210577]

Mr. Rammell: Foreign engagements for my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers are kept under constant review. It is not our practice to announce such visits until they are firm. Because of the unpredictable nature of world events, final decisions on overseas visits are often not possible until very shortly before the day of travel and an announcement is sometimes not possible until a visit is under way.

Ukraine

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports the Government have received concerning the role of the Ukrainian Security Services following the first run of the Ukrainian presidential election. [210782]

Mr. MacShane: The Government followed events in Ukraine closely during the period of the elections. It received regular reports on the situation that covered, among other things, the role of the Ukrainian Security Services.

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's relations with the Ukraine following the recent election. [211278]

Mr. MacShane: The Government looks forward to strengthening relations with Ukraine both bilaterally and through the EU and NATO. I began this process when I represented the United Kingdom at President Yushchenko's inauguration in Kiev last Sunday and had talks with senior officials who are expected to take up ministerial posts. I expressed our Government's support for President Yushchenko's ambitious programme to develop Ukraine as a European democratic market economy under the rule of law.

UN Humanitarian Programmes

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* discussions he had and *(b)* measures his Department is taking in the United Nations to ensure that future UN humanitarian programmes are not abused. [210583]

Mr. Rammell: The Government takes very seriously all allegations of abuse and corruption concerning any UN programme or activity. We are co-operating fully with the Independent Inquiry Committee (IIC) set up by the UN to investigate allegations relating to the UN's Iraq Oil for Food programme. We will study the IIC's findings and recommendations carefully. The UN and its members need to draw lessons from past experience to improve future performance.

The UK is also pressing for full information on recent allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation in UN peacekeeping missions. The UN Secretary-General has shown determination to deal with this problem, and appointed Prince Zeid of Jordan as a special adviser. Prince Zeid's report will produce recommendations to ensure that these issues are properly dealt with in theatre and in the UN.

Venezuela/Colombia

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of *(a)* relations between Columbia and Venezuela and *(b)* the implications of those relations for (i) UK-Venezuelan relations, (ii) UK-Columbian relations and (iii) the wider region. [210778]

Mr. Rammell: Relations between Colombia and Venezuela are currently strained, following the capture of a member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (PARC) on Venezuelan territory. Venezuela has recalled its ambassador to Colombia and suspended future commercial projects between the two countries. We understand that other regional governments, including Peru and Brazil, have offered to mediate in the dispute. We hope that the Colombian and Venezuelan Governments are able to resolve this dispute swiftly and amicably.

We have no reason to believe that the current dispute between Colombia and Venezuela will impact on our bilateral relationship with either country. We continue to work closely with both countries on issues of mutual interest.

Venezuela and Colombia are the largest economies in the Andean region and have an important role to play in the fight against terrorism and narcotics trafficking. It is important in the regional context that the two countries manage to overcome their current problems and resume close and constructive relations.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211332]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not have a Welsh Language Scheme. However, we translate certain key publications into Welsh. In 2004 these included the "Guide to the European Union" and "Wales: European Enlargement".

Western Sahara

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects a UN referendum to be held on the future of the Western Sahara; and if he will make a statement. [210705]

Mr. Rammell: The United Kingdom fully supports the efforts of the UN Secretary General and his Special Representative Alvaro de Soto to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution to the Western Sahara dispute which provides the people of the Western Sahara with an opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination. There are no plans for a UN referendum to be held in the near future.

We believe UN efforts to find a solution to the dispute should be maintained and continue to urge all parties to the dispute to engage constructively with the UN.

Yellow-Red Overseas Organisation

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* identity and *(b)* threat represented by the Yellow-Red Overseas Organization; and if he will make a statement. [211447]

Mr. Alexander: The Government recognises the serious threat posed by terrorism in the South East Asian region. We continuously assess the threat from terrorist cells. But for reasons which the honourable Member will understand, we do not publish these assessments.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Legal Service

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of total spending on the Community Legal Service's Partnership Initiative Budget in each year from 2002–03 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211482]

Mr. Lammy: The Partnership Initiative Budget (PIB) is a unique funding stream which has enabled local organisations, engaged with their Community Legal Service Partnerships (CLSPs), to develop projects that improve access to advice and information for vulnerable people, focusing on local needs. Funding has been allocated over two bidding rounds, with each project attracting up to three years' funding. There will be no further rounds of the PIB.

Approximately £18.4 million has been committed to PIB projects over two funding rounds.

Approximate spend to date:

2001–02: £300,000

2002–03: £3 million

2003–04: £5 million

Projected spend:

2004–05: £5.1 million

2005–06: £3.6 million

2006–07: £1.4 million

From 1 April (the beginning of the SR04 period) we anticipate that no more than £5 million will be paid out to the remaining PIB projects.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what action he is taking to prevent over-billing by solicitors using the Community Legal Service; and if he will make a statement. [211483]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) monitors whether costs claimed by suppliers are reasonable, either by individual bill submitted (for civil representation) or by auditing a sample of files (for controlled work under an LSC contract).

If the costs claimed are judged as reasonable, the supplier is assessed as Category 1. Where a supplier is assessed as either Category 2 or 3—the lowest ratings under the LSC's costs assessment audit—the LSC recovers the amounts over claimed from the supplier. If the supplier gets a Category 3 rating they are put on notice that they will be audited again in six months. If they are still rated as Category 3 on a re-audit, their contract will be terminated.

Under the new Tailored Fixed Fee Scheme, which will become mandatory in April 2005, the LSC will be introducing management information systems that will enable them to identify trends and take action where clients or the fund may be at risk. The systems will allow the LSC to monitor reported and actual costs of cases, changes in case mix and duration of cases, and changes in disbursements incurred.

Legal Aid Debts

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his estimate is of the outstanding value of Legal Aid debts; and what action is being taken to recover these debts. [211484]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission had debts due to it at the end of the financial year 2003–04 of £262 million. Much of this debt—around 72 per cent.—secured by the registration of a statutory charge against property and is not, generally, immediately collectable. The LSC allows the funded client to postpone the operation of the charge, subject to certain conditions, and the debt is not repayable until the property is sold or upon the death of the client.

Cases relating to the statutory charge have since 1988 attached interest. The rate of interest is linked to the Bank of England base rate and currently stands at 5 per cent. simple interest. £50 million of the gross debt due to the Commission relates to interest.

Other debts due to the LSC are normally immediately repayable and are pursued by a debt recovery team. In 2003–04, the LSC successfully recovered £28 million worth of debt. Some of these debts may be owed by funded clients (for example unpaid contributions towards funding legal aid) and are difficult to recover given the limited financial circumstances of the clients.

Referendum

Mr. Heald: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* guidelines and *(b)* legislative provisions regulate whether a referendum may be held during a (i) general election, (ii) local election and (iii) devolved Parliament or regional assembly election; and if he will make a statement. [213119]

Mr. Leslie: There are no Government guidelines or legislative provisions regulating whether a referendum may be held during a general election, local election or devolved Parliament or regional assembly election. The European Union Bill includes provision to allow for combination of polls if the referendum were to take place on the same day as an election or other referendum, as a contingency measure. The Government are aware of the views of the Electoral Commission published in 2003 ahead of Parliamentary and local government elections in Scotland and the Assembly elections in Wales and Northern Ireland that referendums should not be held at the same time as other major polls.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Admissions Criteria

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the consultation document on alternative admissions criteria to post-primary schools. [213091]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave on 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 516W, to the hon. Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson).

Andersonstown News Group

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many grant applications have been made by the Andersonstown News Group in the last six months to *(a)* Invest NI and *(b)* other Government agencies or department. [212045]

Mr. Gardiner: Three applications have been received from July 2004 to date; *(a)* one application was received by Invest NI and *(b)* two were received by North/South Implementation Bodies. Details are as follows:

(a) Invest NI considered an application from the Andersonstown News Group (ANG) for assistance under the Strategic Development Programme for which Invest NI contributes 60 per cent. of the consultancy costs. The ANG subsequently decided to withdraw the application.

(b) InterTradeIreland received an application for funding from ANG under the Acumen Programme. A Letter of Offer was issued to ANG on 24 December 2004 and accepted on 29 December 2004.

Foras na Gaeilge, the Irish Language Agency of the North/South Language Body received one grant application from Preas an Phobail in November 2004, which was unsuccessful.

Autism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects that the autistic spectrum disorders sub-group of the Mental Health Review will produce its report; and if this report will have the same significance as those of the Working Committees. [212192]

Angela Smith: The Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability is an independent review and it is for review members to decide on how they deal with issues relating to autistic spectrum disorder. I understand that a report on autistic spectrum disorder, based largely on the outcome of a conference held in December 2004, will be considered by the review Steering Committee at the end of February. The Steering Committee will then decide whether this will be issued as a separate report and, if so, the timescale for finalising and presenting to the Department.

Children First Strategy

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to publish the Children First Strategy for Northern Ireland. [211182]

Angela Smith: Plans are well advanced for a review of the Children First Strategy, which was originally published in 1999. Terms of Reference have been established and it is expected that a report on the review should be completed by the end of May 2005.

Cold Weather Premium

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people over the age of 75 were claiming the additional cold weather premium at the latest date for which figures are available. [211874]

Mr. Spellar: The Social Security Agency does not provide a specific "additional cold weather premium" although it does provide cold weather payments and winter fuel payments.

It is not possible to calculate the number of people over the age of 75 claiming either of the above. However 50,000 persons over 80 qualified for an additional payment.

Control Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for the Home Department about the introduction and application of control orders in Northern Ireland. [212046]

Mr. Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Home Affairs wrote to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with an outline of his proposed policy on 21 January 2005. Until detailed legislative proposals are brought forward, it will not be possible to assess the applicability of Control Orders to Northern Ireland.

Currie School

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what financial assistance was provided to the Currie primary school in North Belfast in this financial year. [211963]

Mr. Gardiner: I am advised by the Belfast Education and Library Board that Currie primary school has received recurrent funding of £314, 280 to-date, an additional £37,742 under the Interface Schools Initiative and £2,000 for landlord maintenance in this financial year.

Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what incentives he has assessed to encourage dentists in the Province to work within the NHS. [212181]

Angela Smith: The health service provides a full range of dental services through general dental practitioners, the community dental service and the hospital dental service. In terms of general dental practitioners there is a dentist for every 2,400 people here, which is better provision than in England, Scotland and Wales.

No incentives are currently required to attract dentists to the health service. However, the General Dental Services, through which the vast majority of primary dental care is delivered, is in need of reorganisation in order to provide a quality service to patients, address the oral health needs of the population and provide a rewarding career for dental professionals. This is being taken forward through the work on the development of a Primary Care Dental Strategy. As part of that work, consideration will be given to whether any new contractual arrangements, including those currently being developed in England, should be introduced here.

Eating Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects specialist eating disorders teams to be operational within each board area in the Province. [212185]

Angela Smith: The recruitment process is currently ongoing and it is expected that team-members should be appointed by May. However, due to the nature of the very specialized work, further in-service training may be required before the teams are fully operational.

Firearms Order

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place a copy of the equality impact assessment of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 in the Library. [211778]

Mr. Pearson: An equality impact assessment of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004 was not carried out. A previous screening exercise on firearms policy had not indicated an adverse impact on any of the groups listed in Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Fraud Losses

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on losses from fraud affecting the health service in the Province. [212187]

Angela Smith: Information on losses from theft and fraud affecting the Province's health service in each of the last two years is provided in the following table.

£ million

Year ending 31 March	*Reported losses due to theft and fraud* [1]	*Estimate of loss due to incorrect claiming of prescription exemption* [2]
2004	61.721	8.0
2003	121.204	10.0

[1] This represents the amounts reported in the annual accounts of the Department, HSS Boards and HSS Trusts. The Department does not collect information on losses relating to theft and fraud separately.

[2] It should be noted that the estimate of loss due to incorrect claiming of exemptions from prescription charges, will include those losses due to error as well as fraud.

The Department remains committed to the continuing reduction of loss of funds due to fraud and theft.

Health and Social Services Trusts

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost of administration of the health and social services trusts in Northern Ireland is in the 2004–05 financial year. [211522]

Angela Smith: Information on the total cost of administration in the 2004–05 financial year is not available at this time, as the financial year runs until the 31 March 2005.

Health Staff Checks

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what circumstances police checks are conducted on applicants for *(a)* permanent local trust and *(b)* agency health care staff posts. [212168]

Angela Smith: Police checks are not routinely carried out on applicants for permanent local trust or agency health care staff posts. However, the Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety currently recommends that pre-employment checks are carried out where potential employees will have substantial unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults.

Hospital Cleaning

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much each health trust in the Province spent on cleaning in the last 12 months. [212182]

Angela Smith: Provisional figures for Health and Social Service Trust expenditure on cleaning in the 2003–04 financial year are shown in the following table. However, the figures do not include any expenditure on cleaning services that are contracted out, as these cannot be separately identified.

Expenditure on cleaning by HSS trust 2003–04 (provisional)—year ended March 2004

	£000
Altnagelvin HSS Trust	221
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	97
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	332
Causeway HSS Trust	249
Craigavon area Hospital HSS Trust	83
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	35
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	178
Foyle HSS Trust	172
Greenpark HSS Trust	51
Homefirst HSS Trust	207
Mater Infirmorum HSS Trust	66
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	101
NI Ambulance Service	16
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	188
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	582
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	242
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	215
Ulster and Community Hospitals HSS Trust	254
United HSS Trust	241
Total	3,529

MRI Scans

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 252W, on MRI scans/scanners, what action he has taken following the offer by an independent provider to carry out additional MRI scans on a not-for-profit basis. [212176]

Angela Smith: The Department has had preliminary discussions with an independent provider of MRI services to explore options for the provision of additional MRI scans to patients in Northern Ireland. Further consideration is being given to the costs and the level of demand.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in North Belfast. [211964]

Mr. Spellar: Since the launch of Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy in June 2003 work has been going on to ensure that the infrastructure needed to take Neighbourhood Renewal forward in North Belfast is in place. Discussions on the ground are taking place in each of the four neighbourhood renewal areas and the establishment of the Neighbourhood Partnership Boards is already underway.

A final Implementation Plan for Neighbourhood Renewal will be published in March 2005.

Peace Funding

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether, under the extension of PEACE II funding to Northern Ireland, there will be measures in respect of *(a)* child care and *(b)* training, in child care provision in Northern Ireland. [211183]

Mr. Pearson: The PEACE II extension proposals include the continuation of the existing Measure 1.5, Positive Action for Women as a separate measure in the Programme which will continue to support eligible child care projects including those offering training for women in child care or other skills leading to employment. Further skills projects generally, for men or/and women, will also continue to be eligible under a separate measure in the extended Programme.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which organisations have received funding via the European Communities PEACE II programme, broken down by party political affiliations. [211374]

Mr. Pearson: The PEACE II Programme does not fund political parties or political activities. Groups and individuals, including those with party political affiliations, can apply for funding but must demonstrate that their project(s) meet the Programme's eligibility and selection criteria. As a result information on the party political affiliations of such groups and individuals is not collected as part of the Programme's application process and is therefore is not available.

A full list of applicant organisations and projects is available on the Special EU Programmes Body Website www.seupb.org

Pension Credit

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what estimate he has made of the number of people claiming pension credit in each constituency in Northern Ireland; [211520]

(2) how many people in each Northern Ireland constituency were claiming pension credit at the latest date for which figures are available. [211873]

Mr. Spellar: The following table shows the actual amount of people claiming pension credit in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland as of 13 December 2004.

Parliamentary constituency	*Number*
Belfast East	4,480
Belfast North	6,679
Belfast South	3,780
Belfast West	6,487
East Antrim	3,620
East Londonderry	4,561
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5,771
Foyle	5,624
Lagan Valley	3,945
Mid Ulster	5,271
Newry and Armagh	6,052
North Antrim	5,449
North Down	3,536
South Antrim	3,802
South Down	5,144
Strangford	4,173
Upper Bann	5,539
West Tyrone	5,272
Postcode missing	488
Total	89,673

Police

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Government will extend financial assistance to the Police Federation for Northern Ireland to support the group legal action by its members regarding post-traumatic stress disorder suffered by RUC officers in the execution of their duties. [211719]

Mr. Pearson: The Government have no plans to provide financial assistance to the Police Federation for Northern Ireland to support the legal action to which the hon. Lady refers.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers are serving in Northern Ireland. [211814]

Mr. Pearson: As of the 26 January 2005, the number of police officers serving in the PSNI in Northern Ireland is as follows:

Police officers	*Number*
Regular officers (including those seconded into the PSNI and excluding those seconded out of the PSNI	7,452
Full time reserve	1,410
Part time reserve and part time regular constables	907

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers from Northern Ireland have served in mainland Europe during 2004. [211815]

Mr. Pearson: The Police Service of Northern Ireland deployed five officers to mainland Europe in 2004. These officers provided professional support and expertise to ongoing operations in Kosovo and Bosnia.

School Interface Funding

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which schools in North Belfast have received funding to address interface problems in each year since 2000. [211971]

Mr. Gardiner: The schools in North Belfast which have received funding to address interface problems in each year since 2000 are:

Financial year	*School*
2000–01	None
2001–02	Holy Cross Girls' primary school
2002–03	Wheatfield primary school
(From December 2001)	Ballysillan primary school
	Cliftonville primary school
	Currie primary school
	Grove primary school
	Holy Cross Boys' primary school
	Holy Family primary school
	Lowood primary school
	Mercy primary school
	Our Lady's Deanby Gardens primary school
	Sacred Heart primary school
	St. Mary's Star of the Sea primary school
	St. Patrick's primary school
(From March 2002)	Ben Mhadagain Prep
	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain
	Carr's Glen primary school
	Cavehill primary school
	Cedar Lodge Special primary school
	Edmund Rice (Christian Brothers) primary school
	Ligoniel primary school
	Our Lady of Lourdes primary school
	Seaview primary school
	St. Gabriel's college
	St. Therese of Lisieux primary school
	St. Vincent de Paul primary school
	Star of the Sea Girls' primary school
2003–04	Holy Cross Girls' primary school
	Wheatfield primary school
	Ballysillan primary school
	Cliftonville primary school
	Currie primary school
	Grove primary school
	Holy Cross Boys' primary school
	Holy Family primary school
	Lowood primary school
	Mercy primary school
	Our Lady's Deanby Gardens primary school
	Sacred Heart primary school
	St. Mary's Star of the Sea primary school
	St. Patrick's primary school
	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain
	Carr's Glen primary school
	Cavehill primary school
	Cedar Lodge special primary school
	Edmund Rice (Christian Brothers) primary school
	Ligoniel primary school
	Our Lady of Lourdes primary school
	Seaview primary school
	St. Therese of Lisieux primary school
	St. Vincent de Paul primary school
	Star of the Sea Girls' primary school
2004–05	Holy Cross Girls' primary school
	Wheatfield primary school
	Currie primary school
	Holy Family primary school
	Ligoniel primary school
	Our Lady of Mercy secondary school

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to address financial pressures on schools in interface areas of North Belfast. [211972]

Mr. Gardiner: My Department and the Belfast education and library board recognise the pressures faced by schools in the interface areas of North Belfast. The support under the Interface Initiative is expected to continue up to the end of the 2006–07 financial year. Additional funds have been allocated under other initiatives in particular the School Improvement Programme. The development of Education Action Zones will also include schools in North Belfast.

Suspended Employees

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees have been suspended from work at health trusts in the Province in each of the last five years. [212188]

Angela Smith: This information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

HEALTH

Ambulance Services

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what public consultation is required before ambulance services are merged; and if he will make a statement. [211632]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, national health service bodies are under a duty to consult and involve patients, the public and their representatives in the planning of changes to services and to involve them in decisions affecting the operation of services. Should a proposal to change services represent a substantial development or variation, NHS bodies are under a duty to consult relevant local authority overview and scrutiny committees.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who made the decision to second a temporary chief executive to run Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Ambulance Trusts. [211633]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The decision to explore the possibility of a secondment placement as chief executive was jointly made by the chairs of the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire ambulance trusts and the Chief Executive of Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic health authority.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has given to *(a)* Avon, *(b)* Gloucestershire and *(c)* Wiltshire Ambulance Trusts with regards to a possible merger. [211631]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Departmental officials have met with Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority (SHA), at its request, to discuss how best to ensure that the local review was consistent with the national work on the current review of ambulance service delivery. The SHA has also briefed the

Department on the latest position as part of its on-going communications with the Department. Departmental officials meet monthly with the SHA, as they do with other SHAs, to support the SHA on a range of performance and developmental issues.

General guidance has been issued to the national health service on how trusts can comply with the requirements in the Health and Social Care Act 2001 to consult with patients, public and local authority overview and scrutiny committees on substantial changes to how services are provided.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of the merger of the county ambulance services in Gloucestershire, Avon and Wiltshire on the Tri-Service facility in Gloucestershire. [211543]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No merger has taken place. It is for strategic health authorities, as the local headquarters of the national health service, to oversee service improvements in their local areas because, with their extensive knowledge of the local community, they are best placed to do so.

Dentistry

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people *(a)* took and *(b)* passed the International Qualifying Exam which enables dentists from non-EU countries to practise in England in each year from 1997 to 2004. [209192]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of people passing the statutory examination and its successor, the international qualifying examination, is shown in the tables. The data was supplied by the General Dental Council, which administers the examination.

Statutory examination results

Number sitting	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Part I	32	52	86	138	18	0
Part II	19	17	35	62	32	5
Number passing Part II	19	12	32	49	15	1

International qualifying examination results

Number sitting	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Part A	97	164	166	341
Part B	107	154	173	365
Part C	60	57	109	297
Number passing Part C	44	39	81	199

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists are employed in *(a)* Romford, *(b)* the London borough of Havering; *(c)* Greater London, *(d)* Essex and *(e)* England. [210575]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The numbers of dentists employed in the geographical areas requested are shown in the table.

Location	*Number of dentists as of 31 December 2004*
Romford[1]	77
Havering Primary Care Trust (PCT)	117
Essex Strategic Health Authority (SHA)	613
Greater London[2]	3,583
England	19,810

[1] Romford data—'Romford" is not geographically well defined. This data is drawn from the surgery addresses that contain "Romford" as the start of one of their address lines. At 31 December 2004, according to the records on the Dental Practice Board database at 25 January 2005, there were 22 such addresses, with a total number of dentists of 77. Most of the surgeries (17 out 22) were in Havering PCT (5A4). Additionally, two surgeries were in Redbridge PCT (5NA) and three in Barking and Dagenham (5C2).

[2] Greater London is defined as dentists working in the following SHAs:

Q04—North West London SHA
Q05—North Central London SHA
Q06—North East London SHA
Q07—South East London SHA
Q08—South West London SHA

Dermatology

Mr. Bruce George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the need for new patient pathways in dermatology; and what action he will take to promote and support their implementation across the NHS. [209018]

Dr. Ladyman: While initiatives such as the action on dermatology programme have sought to promote innovation in the design and delivery of services, ultimately responsibility for service improvements rest with primary care trusts, in partnership with strategic health authorities and other key stakeholders, as they are best placed to understand and respond to the needs of their local populations.

Drug Reactions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of in-patients in East Sussex had their hospital stay prolonged by adverse drug reactions in the last 12 months. [211779]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the proportion of hospital admissions caused by adverse drug reactions in East Sussex in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [211780]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* There were 669 admissions for adverse drug reactions to East Sussex Hospitals and East Sussex County Healthcare national health service trusts during 2003–04. This represents 0.8 per cent. of all admissions to these trusts during 2003–04.

Free Health Care (Non-UK Residents)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what charges for treatment those who are not ordinarily resident in the UK are not expected to meet; which communicable diseases are exempt from treatment charges levied on those who are not ordinarily resident in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [210825]

Mr. Hutton: Regulation 3 of The National Health Service (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended, provides that no charges can be made for:

> treatment given in an accident and emergency department or in a national health service walk-in centre providing services similar to those of an accident and emergency department;
>
> treatment for certain infectious diseases listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations;
>
> treatment provided at, or following referral from, a special clinic for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections, except for HIV/AIDs where it is only the initial diagnostic testing and associated counselling that are exempt from charges;
>
> compulsory psychiatric treatment;
>
> family planning services.

Overseas visitors may also be eligible for free hospital treatment if they meet one of the other exemptions in the Regulations that are based on individual circumstances rather than on the type of treatment received.

The diseases listed in Schedule 1 of the Regulations are:

Notifiable diseases:

- Cholera
- Food Poisoning
- Plague
- Relapsing Fever
- Smallpox
- Typhus

Diseases to which public health enactments apply:

- Acute encephalitis
- Acute poliomyelitis
- Amoebic dysentery
- Anthrax
- Bacillary dysentery
- Diphtheria
- Leprosy
- Leptospirosis
- Malaria
- Measles
- Meningitis
- Meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis)
- Mumps
- Ophthalmia neonatorum
- Paratyphoid fever
- Rabies
- Rubella
- Scarlet Fever
- Tetanus
- Tuberculosis
- Typhoid fever
- Viral haemorrhagic fever
- Viral hepatitis—Hepatitis C
- Whooping cough
- Yellow fever

Others:

- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)

GPs

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effects of the new general practitioners' contract on general practitioners' earnings. [211222]

Mr. Hutton: General practitioner earnings are currently estimated to increase by 8.8 per cent. in the financial year 2003–04, 10.8 per cent. in 2004–05 and 12 per cent. in 2005–06. The figures for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are based on information for Great Britain. The 2005–06 figures are based on information for the whole of the United Kingdom.

Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish the responses to the consultation on draft regulations to allow the NHS to re-coup costs under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. [210297]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The consultation exercise has only recently ended and we are still analysing the responses. It would therefore be premature to make any announcements on next steps or to make the responses publicly available at this stage. When we have completed our analysis, we will in due course publish a summary of responses in accordance with the provisions of the Government's code of practice on consultations. At that time, we will make the responses themselves available in the Library.

Health Care (Sittingbourne and Sheppey)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to change the funding allocation for health care in Sittingbourne and Sheppey. [211771]

Mr. Hutton: Revenue allocations to cover the period 2003–04 to 2005–06 were announced in December 2002. There will be no changes to the primary care trust allocations for 2003–04 to 2005–06. The next round of allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be announced shortly.

Hospital Infrastructure

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on *(a)* building and *(b)* renovation programmes for hospitals in (i) Romford, (ii) the London borough of Havering, (iii) Greater London, (iv) Essex and (v) England. [210571]

Dr. Ladyman: Details of all hospital building schemes with a capital value of £10 million and over within each strategic health authority have been placed in the Library.

Mental Health Social Workers

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* headcount and *(b)* whole time equivalent mental health social workers have been (i) approved to practise and (ii) in employment in the NHS in each of the last eight years. [210215]

Dr. Ladyman: While this is not data collected for the Department, according to a survey that was undertaken by the Royal College of Psychiatrist's research unit, there are 4200 approved social workers (ASWs) whole-time equivalent (4500 total) currently trained.

From 1994 to 1998, the local government employers' organisation survey collected ASW data. This is the only data available.

ASWs in England and Wales (pre devolution)

	ASWs at 30 September		*Social workers on ASW courses at 30 September*	
	Numbers	*Percentage of all field social workers*	*Numbers*	*Percentage of all ASWs*
1994	4940	18.3	698	14.1
1995	4678	17.0	665	14.2
1996	4494	16.6	525	11.7
1998	4768	17.1	598	12.5

Source:

Social and health care workforce group social services workforce analysis, 1998.

Mixed Wards

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many mixed wards there are in *(a)* Wirral, *(b)* Merseyside, *(c)* North West England and *(d)* England. [211552]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the format requested.

The provision of single-sex accommodation is measured as compliance with three objectives set by the Department. These objectives require national health service trusts to provide single-sex sleeping areas, separate bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women and, where appropriate, safe facilities for the mentally ill. The separation of male and female sleeping areas can be achieved in a variety of ways, including combinations of single rooms and single-sex bays.

Compliance with these objectives is measured at trust level and therefore ward level information is not available.

All NHS trusts providing services to the people of Wirral are fully compliant with the standards which we have set.

Nationally, as at December 2003:

99 per cent. of NHS trusts provide single-sex sleeping accommodation for planned admissions and have robust operational policies in place to protect patients' privacy and dignity.

99 per cent. of NHS trusts meet the additional criteria set to ensure the safety of patients who are mentally ill.

97 per cent. of NHS trusts provide properly segregated bathroom and toilet facilities for men and women.

The small number of NHS trusts which do not yet meet our standards are building new hospitals, the construction of which is well advanced. One such NHS trust is located within the North West of England, in the area overseen by the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority. I am informed that the non-compliant area is one temporary ward, which is being used to accommodate patients while the redevelopment works are completed within the main hospital. This temporary accommodation will be taken out of use by May 2005.

MRI Scanning

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of whether an increase in the availability of MRI scans will require an increase in *(a)* the number of staff in neurology departments and *(b)* the amount of resources available to neurology departments. [208869]

Mr. Hutton: To support the increase in the availability of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning we are increasing staff and ensuring that patients can get faster and better access to neurology services.

Since September 1997, the number of consultants in neurology has increased by 56 per cent., and we are working towards increasing their numbers further by expanding the number of specialist registrar (SpR) opportunities in the specialty. In addition, the number of nurses employed in the national health service has increased by 77,500 since 1997 and there are now around 1,250 general practitioners with special interests providing acute services in clinical specialities, including neurology. The new national MRI mobile scanning units are also adding over 15 per cent., more diagnostic capacity to the NHS and the independent sector will provide additional staff to ease pressure on existing NHS diagnostic teams.

It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with local providers, to assess the needs of their local community, to commission services and to identify the resources and number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. The increase in the acquisition of MRI scans is an excellent opportunity to consider different methods of delivery and different skill mix solutions.

NHS Budgets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when his Department plans to publish allocations for *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* central budgets for (i) 2006–07 and (ii) 2007–08. [210334]

Mr. Hutton: The publication date for the 2006–08 revenue and central budget allocations has not yet been finalised. We expect to publish the 2006–08 primary care trust allocations within the next few weeks.

National Health Service

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to announce the functions of the NHS Business Services Authority. [204267]

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will announce the functions of the new NHS Business Services Authority; and if he will make a statement. [206718]

Ms Rosie Winterton: "An Implementation Framework for Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies", published on 30 November 2004, made it clear that the new body will be the main processing facility responsible for payment, reimbursement, remuneration and reconciliation for national health service patients, employees and other affiliated parties. It will represent a merger of four constituent bodies: the Dental Practice Board, the NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service, the NHS Pensions Agency and the Prescription Pricing Authority. It is intended that the new body should be established formally by 1 October 2005 and a transition team is working to this timetable.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* total budget and *(b)* administration budget was for each (i) NHS region in each year from 1997 to 2002 and (ii) strategic health authority in each year since they were established. [203058]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested has not yet been validated. This process is currently ongoing and the information will be available once the validation process has been completed.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list *(a)* documents and *(b)* communications distributed which received an NHS Gateway reference in 2004. [210423]

Mr. Hutton: 1,124 documents or communications received a DH External Gateway number in 2004. A full list of all documents has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses were employed by (i) the Nottingham City Primary Care Trust, (ii) the Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust, (iii) the Queen's Medical Centre NHS Trust and (iv) other bodies (A) on 1 April 2000 and (B) on the latest date for which figures are available. [211368]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

	2000		*2003*	
	Doctors	*Nurses*	*Doctors*	*Nurses*
Trent Strategic Health Authority (SHA) area	4,380	16,289	4,844	18,922
Nottingham City: Central Primary Care Group (PCG)	51	41	n/a	n/a
Nottingham City: North and West PCG	76	57	n/a	n/a
Nottingham City: South and East PCG	59	49	n/a	—
Nottingham Health Authority	16	—	n/a	n/a
Nottingham Community Health National Health Service Trust	55	884	n/a	n/a
Nottingham Healthcare NHS Trust	114	765	n/a	n/a
Nottingham City Primary Care Trust	n/a	n/a	192	853
Trent SHA	n/a	n/a	6	n/a
Nottingham City Hospital NHS Trust	313	1,508	421	1,770
Queens Medical Centre, Nottingham University NHS Trust	555	1,787	724	2,040
Total specified organisations	1,239	5,091	1,343	4,663

n/a = not applicable.

Notes:

All NHS doctors (1) and qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, including practice nurses employed by unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs) (2), in the Trent SHA area and each specified organisation as at 30 September each year.

1. All doctors includes all practitioners (excluding retainers) and hospital and community health services (HCHS) medical and dental staff. HCHS medical and dental staff excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are also general practitioners working part time in hospitals. All practitioners (excluding retainers) include general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (para. 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

2. UPEs include GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs.

Sources:

Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Department of Health QMS and PMS statistics.

Department of Health medical and dental workforce census.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people are employed by the national health service university; [211259]

(2) what the ethnic breakdown is of staff at the national health service university. [211260]

Mr. Hutton: There are 164 permanent staff currently employed by the national health service university (NHSU) and 186 non permanent staff, giving a total of 350 employees. We do not have details of the ethnic breakdown of all 350 employees at the NHSU. The table shows the breakdown of employees at NHSU who have provided this information.

NHSU ethnicity data

	Number
African	2
Any other group	1
Any other mixed background	1

NHSU ethnicity data

	Number
Caribbean	5
Indian	1
White British	118
White Irish	2
White Other	19
Pakistani	1
Total	150

Source:
NHSU, January 2005.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* total budget and *(b)* administration budget has been set for the NHS Institute for Learning, Skills and Innovation in each of the next five years. [206646]

Mr. Hutton: Work is under way to establish the new national health service Institute for Learning, Skills and Innovation in 2005 and its budget will be set as part of this work and the continuing work on the review of arm's length health bodies.

Mr. Lyons: To ask the Secretary of State for Health to which parts of the UK the NHS staff pension scheme extends. [209954]

Mr. Hutton: There are separate pension schemes covering national health service staff in England and Wales; NHS staff in Scotland; and NHS staff in Northern Ireland.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his Department's policy is on the funding of care of the elderly in nursing homes. [210593]

Dr. Ladyman: Nursing care in nursing homes has been provided by the national health service, free of charge, since October 2001. In addition, the Government provide significant levels of funding for social services departments. Over the last three years, the Government have provided for an average of three per cent. growth in real terms in spending on social services. Local councils have the freedom to use these resources to provide services for older people in care homes, taking account of local circumstances and priorities.

Paddington Hospital

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to make a decision on the proposal for the building of the Paddington Health Campus. [211734]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The outline business case for the Paddington Health Campus is currently being considered by the Department. I expect a decision will be made shortly.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the revenue available to support the revised Paddington Health Campus project to take account of the gap in revenue highlighted in the NAO/Department of Health report on the previous outline business case. [211735]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* No revenue has been made available to support the Paddington Health Campus project, and neither has an estimate been prepared.

Radiography

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost of training a *(a)* radiographer and *(b)* radiologist (i) in each year of training and (ii) in total; and if he will make a statement. [211073]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* Information for England on the cost of training a pre-registration radiographer and radiologist in each year of training and in total excluding bursaries are shown in the tables.

£

Staff group	*2003–04 annual cost*	*2003–04 total cost*
Diagnostic radiographer	7,630	22,890
Therapeutic radiographer	7,160	21,480

Source:
Financial and Workforce Information Return (FWIR) November 2004

The figures in the table cover tuition costs only for the whole length of the course. In addition radiography students could be entitled to a means tested bursary, which in 2003–04 averaged £3,696 per annum.

The cost of training a radiologist is the same as that for any hospital doctor. In the period between entry to medical school and full registration it is estimated that training a doctor costs between £200,000 and £250,000. After full registration, a doctor goes on to specialise, for example as a radiologist. The duration of post-registration training varies greatly and as service and training costs are closely related it is not possible to provide a meaningful estimate of the total cost of training.

In the years up to full registration, the costs are as follows:

Year	*Cost (£)*	*Components*
1	5,923	Higher education cost at pre-clinical rate
2	5,923	Higher education cost at pre-clinical rate
3	58,000	Higher education cost at clinical rate plus NHS clinical placement costs
4	58,000	Higher education cost at clinical rate plus NHS clinical placement costs
5	58,000	Higher education cost at clinical rate plus NHS clinical placement costs
6	28,000	Basic salary support for pre-registration house officer year
Total	213,846	—

Note:
Costs for years three to five are estimates as the actual cost to the national health service of providing clinical placements for medical undergraduates is not known. The cost in year six is the level at which funding is provided centrally. It does not include various additional costs such as out-of-hours payments, which are met by employing trusts.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what change there has been in the number of training places for *(a)* radiographers and *(b)* radiologists since 1997; if he will estimate the cost of the change; and if he will make a statement; [211074]

(2) what estimate he has made of how many *(a)* diagnostic radiographers and *(b)* radiologists are needed to deal with (i) current and (ii) future workloads; [211342]

(3) what targets his Department have set for recruitment of *(a)* radiologists and *(b)* radiographers; and if he will make a statement; [211345]

(4) how many state registered radiographers there were in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004; how many he expects there to be in each year until 2010; and if he will make a statement. [211346]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answers 25 and 27 January 2005]:* Between 1997–98 and 2003–04, the number of training places for diagnostic radiographers, therapeutic radiographers and specialist registrars in clinical radiology increased by around 660, 170 and 440 respectively.

At 2004–05 prices, the cost of the increase for diagnostic radiographers was around £5 million, for therapeutic radiographers the cost was around £1.2 million and for specialist registrars the cost was around £20.6 million.

The Health Professions Council holds information on the number of state registered radiographers. This information can be found at www.hpc-uk.org.

It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with local providers, to assess the needs of their local community. PCTs have the resources to commission services as well as to be able to identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision and development of radiography services.

The expectation is that the number of radiographers and radiologists will continue to increase.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on introducing the roles of assistant practitioner and advanced practitioner in radiology departments since 1997; and if he will estimate the cost of these changes. [211075]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The introduction of assistant practitioners and advanced practitioners in radiology departments is one of a range of initiatives that are contributing to an increase in workforce capacity. This is being supported by a national radiography recruitment and retention project, which is encouraging the expansion through the use of innovative skill mix and career escalator models. £3.4 million has been made available to support this.

It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs), in partnership with local providers, to assess the needs of their local community. PCTs have the resources to commission services, and to identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. This process provides the means for addressing local needs within the health community including the provision and development of radiography services. Data on advanced practitioners is not collected centrally. However data for assistant practitioners will be available from the September 2005 workforce census. The overall radiography headcount has increased by 13,300 or 13 per cent. since 1997.

Rural Areas (Health Professionals)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to *(a)* recruit and *(b)* retain the services of health professionals in rural and remote areas. [211548]

Mr. Hutton: It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs) to assess and make provision for the healthcare needs of their local communities. PCTs have the resources to commission services and identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services. The flexibilities provided by the new general medical services (QMS) and alternative provider medical services (APMS) contracts will assist PCTs in securing local workforce capacity. In addition, the Department is working closely with those PCTs who have been identified as having specific problems in general practitioner and other health professional recruitment. This work will be disseminated to share good practice across all PCTs, strategic health authorities and deaneries. "NHS Employers", the new employers organisation for the national health service, will provide advice and support to local NHS organisations still experiencing recruitment difficulties.

A range of recruitment and retention initiatives are in place to help expand the NHS workforce across England. These include improving pay and conditions, encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer, help with accessing child care, increasing training, attracting back returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns. As a result of these measures, between September 1997 and March 2004, the total number of qualified nurses employed in the NHS has increased by 77,500. The primary care workforce has also expanded. Between September 1997 and September 2003, the number of GPs (excluding retainers) employed by the NHS has increased by 3,169, or 11.3 per cent., and the primary care nursing workforce has increased by 18,884, or 24.4 per cent.

Secure Units

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance his Department has issued to local authorities for the siting of medium secure units for the treatment of people with dangerous and severe personality disorders; and if he will make a statement. [210783]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There has been no national guidance issued to local authorities for the siting of medium secure units for the treatment of people with dangerous and severe personality disorder. Any business case for such a unit should be dealt with locally and would be subject to local planning permission, scrutiny by local authority scrutiny committees and oversight and agreement by the local strategic health authority as with any other business case.

There is guidance advising on aspects of the physical infrastructure of a medium secure unit. This guidance can be accessed by registering on the knowledge and information portal at http://www.nhsestates.gov.uk.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 2 February 2005

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Sinn Fein Members

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Leader of the House how much public money has been paid to Sinn Fein hon. Members in *(a)* salaries, *(b)* incidental expenses provision, *(c)* additional costs allowance, *(d)* staffing allowance, *(e)* Members' travel, *(f)* Members' staff travel, *(g)* centrally purchased stationery, *(h)* centrally provided computer equipment and *(i)* other associated costs since June 2001. [211524]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the details of Members' allowances for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 which were published on 21 October last. They are available on the website www.parliament.uk. We intend to publish 2004–05 figures in the autumn of this year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Environmental Action Fund

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list organisations in receipt of Environmental Action Fund payments in each year since 2002; which organisations she expects will be awarded grants in the period 2005–08; and what the annual funding is expected to be in each case. [211407]

Mr. Morley: Information on these grant awards will be placed in the Library of the House.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the size of the Environmental Action Fund *(a)* was for 2002–05 and *(b)* will be in 2005–08; what funds were available to bidders in 2002–05; and what funds will be available to bidders in 2005–08. [211408]

Mr. Morley: The planned level of programme resources for the Environmental Action Fund (EAF) was £4.19 million per year for the three financial years from 2002–03 to 2004–05. In 2002–03 a total of £4.48 million was actually offered to groups, but this included some funding for groups in their third and final year of funding from a previous grant round. Groups were then required to reapply for funding at the start of each financial year. Following those applications, £4.26 million was offered to groups in 2003–04 and £4.12 million in 2004–05.

The planned level of EAF programme resources for projects relating to sustainable consumption and production is £2.25 million per year for the financial years from 2005–06 to 2007–08. Offers of grant totalling £2.25 million have been made for 2005–06, with provisional offers of £2.4 million for both 2006–07 and 2007–08 (reflecting the likelihood of some slippage or scaling-down of projects as they develop their work plans in the first year and then reapply for funding for the second and third years).

In addition, £1.95 million of EAF grant is being rolled over in 2005–06 to existing recipients undertaking biodiversity projects. Arrangements for supporting biodiversity and natural resource protection in 2006–07 are being considered and will be announced in the summer.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many groups have bid for funding from the Environmental Action Fund in 2005–08; and how many of the unsuccessful bids are associated with increasing awareness and understanding of sustainable development. [211409]

Mr. Morley: We received 250 bids for funding from the Environmental Action Fund (EAF) in 2005–08. I have announced today that 36 projects were successful in the competition and are being offered grant funding.

The large majority of bids, both successful and unsuccessful, included elements of increasing awareness and understanding of sustainable development. It is not possible to quantify these elements, as the criteria for the 2005–08 grant competition sought applications for projects that would focus on moving beyond raising awareness and towards action for influencing and delivering more sustainable consumption behaviours.

Environmental Education Projects

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on funding for environmental education projects following the wind-up of the landfill tax credit scheme; and what steps she is taking to ensure that there is no shortfall in funding. [211398]

Mr. Morley: The Landfill Tax Credit Scheme was reformed in 2003, as a result of which waste projects with an education component (categories C and CC) are no longer eligible for funding. Only a small proportion of that funding was used to support projects with a formal education basis. Certain environmental educational projects remain eligible for funding under the current scheme, for example in the biodiversity category. There was no direct replacement of the LTCS funding stream to support projects that might previously have been eligible. Projects with an environmental education component are supported by the Environmental Action Fund. Several other Defra programmes contribute to more informal modes of environmental education and awareness raising, for example £30 million over three years has been allocated to the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) for national and local waste awareness campaigns.

Government are striving to ensure that education for sustainable development is recognised as part of the core education agenda across all education and skills sectors. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and the Sustainable Development Commission have recruited a senior adviser on sustainable development to liaise effectively with non-governmental organisations and other Government Departments to develop partnerships and coordinate action to achieve the objectives of the Sustainable Development Action Plan. DfES, with Forum for the Future and professional organisations, has also set up the Sustainability Implementation Group to make it easier for colleges and universities to raise the profile of sustainability literacy in all curricula for post-16 professional education.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many car parking spaces are provided for those working *(a)* in and *(b)* visiting her Department. [208927]

Alun Michael: The total number of people employed in Defra and its agencies is 13,710[1] and the number of parking spaces provided is 5,683. This number includes an apportionment of spaces on sites which are shared with other Departments where parking is available on a "first come, first served" basis.

[1] Headcount—ie includes part-time staff.

DEFENCE

Army Recruitment

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence in which months during 2004 Regular Army recruitment was stopped for *(a)* the whole Regular Army and *(b)* sections of the Regular Army. [211252]

Mr. Caplin: There was no cessation of recruiting to either the whole Regular Army or sections of the Regular Army in 2004.

Court Martial

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedures are in place to ensure that details of service men and women who have been convicted under a court martial are passed on to the civilian police and recorded on their database. [209132]

Mr. Caplin: Each of the Services has a system in place to ensure that details of civil and some military offences, following conviction at courts martial or at summary level, are recorded on the Police National Computer. The Royal Military Police process this information on behalf of the Army and Naval Service; the RAF Provost and Security Service carries out the same function for the RAF.

Decommissioning Costs

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the effect of the application of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 2237/2004 of 29 December 2004, OJ L393 of volume 47 of 31 December 2004, on the manner in which the Government estimates decommissioning costs of *(a)* former Ministry of Defence property, *(b)* airfields, *(c)* nuclear sites and *(d)* sites at risk from contamination of asbestos and other substances. [211361]

Mr. Caplin: HM Treasury requires Government Departments to account for decommissioning liabilities in accordance with the Treasury Resource Accounting Manual (RAM) which is based on UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. The RAM does not require Departments to comply with International Accounting Standards (IAS) and, in particular, IAS 37 on this subject. Instead, the RAM requires Departments to follow the UK Standard, Financial Reporting Standard 12, that was developed in parallel to IAS 37 and is substantially the same.

The Ministry of Defence continues to account for its decommissioning liabilities in accordance with requirements set by the Treasury which accord with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice. Therefore, under the current requirements there will be no effect from the application of Commission Regulation (EC) No 2237/2004 of 29 December 2004, OJ L393 of Volume 47 of 31 December 2004.

HMS Sussex

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement concerning his agreement with Odyssey Marine Exploration over the recovery of the wreck HMS Sussex and treasure contained in it; [210907]

(2) what steps will be taken properly to record archaeologically the wreck of HMS Sussex and finds from the wreck; and if he will make a statement; [210909]

(3) what steps he will take to preserve the archaeological integrity of the site of HMS Sussex; and if he will make a statement; [210913]

(4) what the Government's share of the proceeds of sale of any finds from the wreck of HMS Sussex will be; and if he will make a statement; [210911]

(5) if he will publish the project plan for the proposed operation by Odyssey Marine Exploration on the site of HMS Sussex before work starts; and if he will make a statement. [210914]

Mr. Caplin: On 27 September 2002, Ministry of Defence's Disposal Services Agency (DSA), on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, signed a Licence Agreement with the United States firm Odyssey Marine Exploration for the archaeological excavation and recoveries from the wreck of what is believed to be the wreck of the Sussex, a British warship lost in 1694.

A copy of the Partnering Agreement Memorandum, setting out the main provisions of the Licence Agreement, and a copy of a Synopsis of the Archaeological Requirements contained within the Licence Agreement were placed in the Library of the House on 25 November 2002.

It is intended that the Project Plan will be published before any intrusive work begins on the site.

Details of the Project and Frequently Asked Questions have been published on the DSA's website www.edisposals.com.

Infantry Regiments

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for

Colchester (Bob Russell) of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 73W, on infantry battalions, which nationalities make up the strength of each regiment at the date shown. [209175]

Mr. Caplin: It is not possible to publish the details of this answer so I intend to write to my hon. Friend and place a copy of the letter and attachments in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether detainees initially detained in Iraq in connection with weapons of mass destruction have been moved outside Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [210660]

Mr. Hoon: Never.

Ministerial Visits

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what occasions in the last two years a Minister has made an official visit to *(a)* an injured soldier and *(b)* bereaved families of soldiers; and who the Minister concerned was in each case. [212225]

Mr. Hoon: Over the last two years, Ministers have made frequent official visits to injured personnel.

Secretary of State for Defence

April 2003—Selly Oak Hospital, Birmingham

December 2003—Shaibah Field Hospital, Iraq

June 2004—Shaibah Field Hospital, Iraq

Minister for Armed Forces

May 2003—Shaibah Field Hospital, Iraq

October 2003—Shaibah Field Hospital, Iraq

Minister for Defence Procurement

April 2004—visit to Shaibah Field Hospital

Under-Secretary of State for Defence

February 2004—Chilwell Rehabilitation Centre

March 2004—Shaibah Field Hospital in Iraq

March 2004—Cyprus

October 2004—JHQ Medical Centre, Germany.

Ministers have also visited units in Iraq or when personnel have returned from Iraq. On some of these occasions they met injured personnel. As this was not the main focus of the visits, the exact details have not been recorded.

Ministers have also met the families of personnel killed in Iraq on numerous occasions. Between 29 March 2003 and 2 July 2003 eight repatriation ceremonies, to mark the return of soldiers killed in Iraq were conducted at Brize Norton. Each minister attended two of these ceremonies, where they met the bereaved families.

The Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Minister for Armed Forces, the Minister for Defence Procurement and the Under-Secretary of State for Defence met bereaved families at the Remembrance Ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral in October 2003.

Ministers have also held over 20 private meetings with bereaved families of personnel killed in Iraq and elsewhere. These are arranged at a family's request. To ensure that the wishes and privacy of the family are respected, full details of such meetings remain confidential.

Nuclear Disarmament

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps towards compliance with the UK's commitment to pursue disarmament negotiations in good faith under Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty have been taken with regard to entering the Trident system into nuclear disarmament treaties. [211436]

Mr. Hoon: The United Kingdom is committed to all its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including under Article VI, and has a good record on disarmament. For example, we have reduced the total explosive power of our nuclear forces by over 70 per cent. since the end of the Cold War and in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review we announced that only one Trident submarine would be on deterrent patrol at any one time. That submarine would normally be on several days notice to fire with its missiles de-targeted.

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) based at the United Nations in Geneva, is the designated permanent multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. The priorities for nuclear disarmament were agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and were the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) at the CD and signature and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The First Plenary Session of the 2005 Conference on Disarmament opened on 27 January, but the CD has been unable to agree a programme of work since 1997. The UK continues to support the entry into force of the CTBT, and negotiation of a FMCT.

Porton Down

Mr. David Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what action the Government have taken to investigate the claims of national servicemen who volunteered for experiments at Porton Down and who believe that they have suffered damage to their health. [208868]

Mr. Caplin: Although there is no scientific evidence of a pattern of unusual illness or disease occurring as a result of exposure to agents at Porton Down, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) nevertheless recognises that some former Porton Down volunteers have concerns about their health. In order to address these concerns the MOD is funding an independently-run epidemiological study, overseen by the Medical Research Council, to assess the incidence of cancer and mortality among former Porton Down volunteers. The study is expected to report in 2006 and it is intended that the results will be published soon after.

In addition, any former volunteer concerned that their health has been affected by participation in the Porton Down Service Volunteer Programme can be referred by their GP to the Medical Assessment

Programme (MAP), based at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. There they will have a thorough clinical examination with a consultant physician; tests and investigations if appropriate; and the opportunity to discuss symptoms or conditions and their possible linkage, if any, to the particular trials in which they took part.

Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has held with the Director of Infantry on the proposal to cut one of the Fusilier battalions of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. [204871]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1795.

Royal School of Engineering

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to move the Royal School of Engineering from Chatham; and if he will make a statement. [211474]

Mr. Caplin: None.

UK Forces (Germany)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK forces personnel are serving in Germany; and if he will make a statement. [210303]

Mr. Caplin: Around 23,000 Service personnel are permanently based in Germany. Of these, around 4,000 are currently deployed on operations outside the Federal Republic.

Ukraine

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what bilateral relations exist between his Department and its Ukranian counterpart; and if he will make a statement. [213277]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has good bilateral relations with the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence which are promoted through a direct programme of bilateral contacts and activities under the auspices of Partnership for Peace. These include the provision of a civilian defence adviser to the Ukrainian MOD and other assistance with defence reform. We also provide officer and non-commissioned officer, English language and peace support operations training.

Winter Supplementary Estimate

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* implications and *(b)* consequences of the changes sought in the Ministry of Defence's winter supplementary estimate are; what the reasons for the changes are; and what assessment he has made of the impact of the revised spending plans on (i) budgets and (ii) departmental targets. [202265]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 6 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 338–39W in which he asked a very similar question.

PRIME MINISTER

Meetings

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met President George Bush; and what matters were discussed. [211898]

The Prime Minister: I last met President Bush in Washington on 12 November 2004. We discussed a wide range of issues including Iraq, EU/US relations and my priorities for the UK Presidency of G8. I refer my hon. Friend to the press conference I held with President Bush after our meeting, a transcript of which is available on the No. 10 website.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Legal Aid Funding Code

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what procedures will be used to amend the Legal Aid Funding Code. [213168]

Mr. Lammy: Sections 8 and 9 of the Access to Justice Act 1999 set out the procedures relating to the Funding Code. The Legal Services Commission may from time to time prepare a revised version of the code which must be subject to appropriate consultation. The Funding Code is in two parts: Part I contains the Criteria, and Part II contains the Procedures. Amendments to both Parts must be approved by the Lord Chancellor before the relevant Parliamentary process. Revised Funding Code Criteria must normally be approved by a resolution of each House of Parliament before coming into force, although the Act allows urgent amendments to come into force in certain circumstances in advance of that approval. Revised Funding Code Procedures must be laid before Parliament.

Magistrates Courts (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the magistrates courts which operate within the Greater London area. [213382]

Mr. Leslie: The Greater London Magistrates Courts Authority (GLMCA) has responsibility for the provision of magistrates courts in the Greater London region until the 31 March 2005. There are currently 38 magistrates courts within the GLMCA area and this figure includes the family court at Wells Street, youth and the satellite courts. They are listed in the following table:

Courthouse	*Address*
Bow Street MC	28 Bow Street, Covent Gardens, WC2E 7AS
City of London MC	1 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4N 4XY
Horseferry Road MC	70 Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AX
Inner London Family Proceedings Court	59–65 Wells Street, London, W1A 3AE
Marylebone MC	181 Marylebone Road, London, NW1 5QL
Thames MC	58 Bow Road, London, E3 4DJ
Barking MC	East Street, Barking, Essex, IG11 8EW
Havering MC	19 Main Road, Romford, Essex, RM1 3BH
Redbridge MC	850 Cranbrook Road, Barkingside, Ilford, Essex, IG61HW
Stratford MC	389–397 High Street, Stratford, E15 4SB

Courthouse	*Address*
Waltham Forest MC	1 Farnam Avenue, Walthamstow, E17 4NZ
Brent MC	448 High Road, London, NW10 2DZ
Barnet MC	7c High Street, Barnet, EN5 5UE
Enfield MC	Lordship Lane, London, N17 6RT
Haringey MC	Bishops Road, Highgate, London, N6 4HS
Harrow MC	PO Box 164, Roslyn Crescent, Harrow, HA1 2JY
Hendon MC	The Hyde, Hendon, London, NW9 7BY
Highbury Corner MC	1 Holloway Road, London, N7 8JA
Uxbridge MC	Harefield Road, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB8 1PQ
Bromley MC	London Road, Bromley, BR1 1RA
Belmarsh MC	Belmarsh Road, London, SE28 OHA
Bexley MC	Norwich Place, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7NB
Camberwell Green MC	15 D'Eynsford Road, Camberwell Green, SE5 7UP
Croydon MC	Barclay Road, Croydon, CR9 3NG
Greenwich MC	9 Blackheath Road, London, SE10 8PQ
Sutton MC	Shotfield, Wellington, Surrey, SM6 OJA
Tower Bridge MC	211 Tooley Street, London, SE1 2JY
Woolwich MC	Market Street, London, SE18 6QY
Acton MC	Winchester Street, Acton, W3 8PB
Balham MC	217 Balham High Road, London, SW17 7BS
Brentford MC	Market Place, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 SEN
Ealing MC	Green Man Lane, Ealing, London, W13 OSD
Feltham MC	Hanworth Road, Feltham, Middlesex, TW13 5AF
Kingston-upon-Thames MC	9 High Street, Kingston, Surrey, KT1 1 JW
Richmond-upon-Thames MC	Parkshot, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 2RF
South Western MC	176a Lavender Hill, Battersea, London, SW11 1JU
West London MC	81 Talgarth Road, London, W6 8DN
Wimbledon MC	Alexandra Road, Wimbledon, SW19 7JP

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211680]

Mr. Lammy: Since its inception in June 2003, my Department, the Department for Constitutional Affairs, has conducted two advertising campaigns:

> (i) A national regional poster advertising campaign on buses to promote recruitment to the magistracy;
>
> (ii) radio, press and ambient media targeting court fine defaulters (under the title Operation Payback).

My Department has also conducted one campaign comprising leaflets and posters to raise awareness of the Freedom of Information Act among public sector bodies and the general public.

The Public Guardianship Office, one of our two executive agencies, plans to run a campaign in 2005–06 to raise awareness of its services.

All details are set out in the following table.

£

	2003–04 spend	*2004–05 spend*	*2005–06 projected spend*
(a) Advertising			
Operation Payback Phase 1, March 2004 (regional radio, press)	230,000	292,000	750,000
Magistrates recruitment campaign (bus back posters)	342,000	102,000	—
(b) Publicity	—	—	—
Freedom of Information Act (posters and leaflets to raise awareness among public sector bodies and the general public) December 2004 to March 2005	—	300,000	—
Public Guardianship Office (posters and leaflets in doctors' surgeries)	—	—	60,000
Magistrates recruitment campaign: two DVDs for employers and potential candidates	—	60,000	—

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Tax

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was added to the council tax rate of a band D council tax payer by each *(a)* parish and *(b)* town council in the last year for which figures are available in respect of each such council. [213337]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ropetackle Site (Shoreham)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what square footage is planned for the Community and Arts facility on the Ropetackle site in Shoreham-by-Sea. [213174]

Yvette Cooper: The Deed of Agreement (Pursuant to Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990) dated 10 December 2002 states the Community Facilities should be

> "measuring approximately but no more than 1,000 square metres or such smaller size as shall be agreed between the Developers and the District Council."

Discussions are ongoing to establish a subsequent agreement between South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and Adur district council. This agreement will allow for part of the Community Facilities to be incorporated into a development for an Enterprise Centre, which will provide premises for new and growing businesses in Shoreham. In return SEEDA will contribute towards the fitting-out of the remaining Community Facilities which is estimated to be in the order of 630 square metres plus mezzanine.

TRANSPORT

Rail Usage

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the change in the level of rail usage has been since 2000. [212096]

Mr. Darling: Passenger usage, measured by passenger kilometres was 38.2 billion in 2000–01 (financial year) and 40.9 billion in 2003–04, so increasing over the period by 2.7 billion passenger kilometres. People are using railways more than at any other time since 1947.

Freight moved was 18.1 billion tonne kilometres in 2000–01 and 18.9 billion tonne kilometres in 2003–04, so increasing by 0.8 billion tonne kilometres.

TREASURY

Cancer

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the survival rates for the common forms of cancer were in each year since 1990, broken down by *(a)* social class and *(b)* English region. [213142]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Andrew Murrison, dated 2 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the survival rates for the common forms of cancer were in each year since 1990, broken down by *(a)* social class and *(b)* English region. [213142]

Cancer survival rates are not available by individual year of diagnosis.

Survival rates by socio-economic deprivation, and trends in the rates, for 20 of the major cancer sites for adult patients (15–99 years) diagnosed during 1986–99 in England and Wales were published in 2004 in the British Journal of Cancer: Coleman MP, Rachet B, Woods LM, et al. (2004). Trends and socio-economic inequalities in cancer survival in England and Wales up to 2001. Br J Cancer 2004; 90: 1367–1373.

Information on cancer survival rates for English regions for adult patients diagnosed since 1990 have been published for three time periods (based on regions at the time of publication). These are:

For patients diagnosed during 1992–94 and followed up to the end of 1999, by former health regions (and health authorities) in England. These can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D4878.xls http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5388.xls

For patients diagnosed during 1993–95 and followed up to the end of 2000, by former health regions (and health authorities) in England. These can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5389.xls http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D5392.xls

For patients diagnosed during 1994–96 and followed up to 31 December 2001, by government office regions (and strategic health authorities) in England. These can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D8028.xls

Capital and Resource Budgets

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the level of the available *(a)* annually managed expenditure margin and *(b)* departmental expenditure reserve for capital and resource budgets for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213233]

Mr. Boateng: The latest forecast of the level of the Annually Managed Expenditure margin for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 was published in Table B16 of the 2004 pre-Budget report (Cm 6408). Latest plans for the resource and capital Reserves in these years were published in Table B18. These figures will be updated in the 2005 Budget.

Civil Servants

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of the civil service job reductions recommended by the Gershon Review were in *(a)* London, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Scotland, broken down by Department. [213274]

Mr. Boateng: The Gershon Review made no recommendations on the geographical locations of civil service work force reductions in UK Government Departments. These are a matter for individual Departments to consider in line with their business and service delivery needs.

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213774]

Mr. Timms: These costs are not separately identifiable.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213628]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury building at 1 Horse Guards Road has one staff restaurant and one coffee shop. There is no bar. Information broken down in the form requested is not available. For total costs of restaurant and associated facilities since 1997, I refer the hon. Member to the replies given on 4 March 2002, *Official Report*, column 107W, and on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1405W, to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow).

Economic Growth (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the expected rate of economic growth within the Greater London area over the next three years. [213384]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury does not produce economic forecasts for individual regions of the United Kingdom. However, I can report that since 1997, the Government Office Region (GOR) of London has enjoyed above average growth in GVA per capita and the highest employment and lowest unemployment since records began. At the same time, the regional policies this Government has put in place to level up the performance of all regions to that of the best has seen some of the traditionally weaker performing regions enjoying above UK average growth of GVA per capita in recent years.

Engagements

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings he has had with the Chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland since 1997. [210754]

Mr. Timms: Treasury Ministers regularly meet senior representatives from the banking sector, including the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Expenditure Growth

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of planned real growth of total managed expenditure between *(a)* 2007–08 and 2008–09 and *(b)* 2008–09 and 2009–10; and if he will make a statement. [213232]

Mr. Boateng: The 2004 pre-Budget report set out the Government's latest expenditure projections through to 2009–10. These projections will be updated as normal in the forthcoming Budget.

Income Tax

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate *(a)* the number of income tax payers with incomes in excess of £100,000 for (i) 2004–05 and (ii) each year from 2005–06 to 2009–10 and *(b)* the percentage of income tax payers with incomes in excess of £100,000 as a percentage of (A) all income tax payers and (B) all individuals in employment. [213189]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to table 3.3 "Distribution of total income before and after tax, 1998–99 to 2004–05" on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income distribution/tables 3_december04.xls

The table shows the number of income taxpayers with a total income of £100,000 or more and the proportion of all income taxpayers they represent. The number of income taxpayers in 2004–05 with employment income, whose total income is £100,000 or more, as a proportion of all income taxpayers with employment income, is 1 per cent. Information for future years is unavailable.

Note:

Figures are based on the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes and are in line with December 2004 pre Budget report.

Inheritance Tax

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been collected in inheritance tax in each of the last three years. [213383]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on inheritance tax collected and other tax receipts is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/tax_receipts/table1–2.xls

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place the review of prescription charges undertaken in 1998 as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review in the Library. [203066]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

An internal review of prescription charges was undertaken by departmental officials in conjunction with Her Majesty's Treasury as part of the formulation of Government policy for the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review. This work fed into the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review, which was published by Her Majesty's Treasury and is available in the Library.

R&D Tax Credits

Mr. Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total estimated take-up rates were of research and development tax credits by eligible firms in each year since 2000, broken down by *(a)* size of company and *(b)* industrial sector. [211928]

John Healey: R&D tax credits were introduced for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in April 2000 and for other companies in April 2002. The estimated take-up rates for the two schemes are given in the table.

The figures relate to claims made in Corporation Tax returns received on or before 12 October 2004. Figures, particularly for later periods, are likely to rise as more claims are received.

Take-up for R&D tax credits

	SME tax credit		*Large company tax credit*	
	Number of claims	*As a proportion of the estimated eligible population[1] (Percentage)*	*Number of claims*	*As a proportion of the estimated eligible population[2] (Percentage)*
2000–01	1,738	38.6	—	—
2001–02	3,225	71.7	—	—
2002–03	4,491	99.8	715	71.5
2003–04	3,199	71.7	337	33.7
2004–05	135	3.0	7	0.7

[1] Estimate of number of eligible companies published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, March 2000.

[2] Estimate of number of eligible companies published in the Regulatory Impact Assessment, April 2002.

Information is not available by industrial sector.

Mr. Key: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of research and development tax credits has been since 2000, broken down by *(a)* size of company and *(b)* industrial sector; and what the estimated value to 2014 is in each case. [211929]

John Healey: R&D tax credits were introduced for small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in April 2000. The estimated value of support claimed through the SME scheme is published as National Statistics on the Inland Revenue's website (http://www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/index.htm).

In April 2002, R&D tax credits were extended to other companies. The latest monitoring data show that £160 million of support has so far been claimed through this large company scheme.

Figures on the forecast cost of R&D tax credits were provided in the Paymaster General's written answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 2 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 816W. The table breaks these figures down by scheme.

£ million

	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
SME scheme	250	260	270
Large company scheme	420	440	490
Total	670	700	760

Note: Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 million

Information on R&D tax credits is not available by industry sector.

Stamp Duty

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue implication of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales so as to charge marginal rates of *(a)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 2 per cent. on sales revenue between £60,000 and £249,999, 5 per cent. on sales revenue between £250,000 and £499,999, 7 per cent. on sales revenue of £500,000 and above, *(b)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 2 per cent. on sales revenue between £60,000 and £249,999, 5 per cent. on sales revenue between £250,000 and £499,999, 8 per cent. on sales revenue of £500,000 and above, *(c)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 2 per cent. on sales revenue between £60,000 and £249,999, 4 per cent. on sales revenue between £250,000 and £499,999, 8 per cent. on sales revenue of £500,000 and above and *(d)* 0 per cent. on property sales of £60,000 or less, 2 per cent. on sales revenue between £60,000 and £249,999, 4 per cent. on sales revenue between £250,000 and £499,999 and 7 per cent. on sales revenue of £500,000 and above. [212062]

Mr. Timms: The estimated Exchequer effect, in 2005–06 terms, of restructuring stamp duty on residential property sales according to the four schemes described in the question is given in the table. This does not include any allowance for behavioural changes or changes to reliefs.

Marginal rates of SDLT on residential property and Exchequer effect of restructuring

Price of residential property	*Regime (a)*	*Regime (b)*	*Regime (c)*	*Regime (d)*
£0-£59,999 (percentage)	0	0	0	0
£60,000-£249,999 (percentage)	2	2	2	2
£250,000-£499,999 (percentage)	5	5	4	4
£500,000 and above (percentage)	7	8	8	7
Exchequer effect (£ million)[1]	+10	+170	-130	-290

[1] In 2005–06 accruals terms; negative indicates a cost.

Tax Credits

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in *(a)* Bassetlaw and *(b)* England were overpaid tax credits in 2004; and of these how many are being pursued for repayment. [213390]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of tax credits overpayments, I refer my hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W. Details of how overpayments are recovered are provided in the Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit." Wherever practical overpayments are recovered out of future tax credit payments. Where an award of tax credits has ceased and there remains an overpayment to be recovered, the Inland Revenue issues claimants with a "Notice to Pay". The claimant has the option to choose to pay back an overpayment over 12 months.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are being charged interest on tax credits overpaid to them in 2004 through no fault of their own. [213391]

Dawn Primarolo: None that I am aware of.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what criteria are being used to determine whether to write off tax credits overpaid to people during 2004. [213393]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

A claimant will not be asked to pay back an overpayment where it was caused by a mistake by the Inland Revenue and it was reasonable for the claimant to think their award was right.

The Inland Revenue may also decide that a claimant should not be asked to pay back all or part of an overpayment, if this would cause hardship to the claimant and his/her family.

Unallocated Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213265]

Mr. Boateng: Plan figures for departmental unallocated provision in 2005–06 were published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2004–05, Supplementary Budget Information (Cm 6133). Plan figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2005–06, Supplementary Budget Information.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Cleaning Contractors

Dame Marion Roe: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, if he will make a statement on the terms of the employment of contracted cleaners in the House. [214178]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: Most cleaning in both Houses of Parliament is carried out by external contractors. The main cleaning contract was awarded in September 2003 following a competitive procurement exercise. The cleaners who work in the Palace are not therefore employed by the parliamentary authorities but by the contractors who are, in the first instance, responsible for their terms and conditions.

The contractor has kept the parliamentary authorities informed since issues of pay rates and other terms and conditions were first raised by the representatives of the cleaners. We understand that the contractor and the representatives of their employees are actively involved in discussions.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AIDS (Africa)

6. **Linda Gilroy:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on programmes to tackle AIDS in Africa. [212233]

Hilary Benn: Last year, I attended a series of meetings with my EU counterparts and Foreign Ministers to discuss ways of addressing reproductive health and HIV in Africa and future EC action on AIDS and other poverty related diseases. My PUSS also met with the European Commission representatives from Directorate-General (DG) Development and DG Research to discuss the need to focus on funding for new prevention technologies for HIV.

DFID officials are engaging with the European Commission on the revision of their framework for tackling diseases of poverty called "The Programme of Action to Confront HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria through External Action".

Iraq

7. **Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on food rationing in Iraq. [212234]

Hilary Benn: Iraq's Public Distribution System, established during the period of sanctions against Saddam Hussein, provides food virtually free of charge to the entire population regardless of need. The Iraqi Government have recognised that reform is now needed to move to a cash payment system targeted at the poor and unemployed. This should help Iraqi agriculture, encourage private trade and remove price distortions, at the same time as ensuring that families in need are properly provided for. The details will be a matter for the new Transitional Government.

11. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's activities in Iraq. [212238]

Hilary Benn: Since March 2003, DFID has committed £333 million for humanitarian and reconstruction projects in Iraq, and disbursed approximately £250 million.

DFID's main objectives for reconstruction assistance in Iraq are: rapid, sustainable and equitable economic growth; effective and accountable governance; and social and political cohesion and stability. DFID has offices alongside the British embassy Baghdad and in Basra, helping to deliver and monitor our programme of assistance.

Current DFID bilateral assistance in Iraq includes: employment generation and infrastructure repair in southern Iraq; building capacity within Iraq's public administration system; strengthening Iraqi civil society groups and encouraging broad political participation; capacity-building across the four southern governorates in both the public and private sector; and support to the justice and media sectors.

More detailed information on DFID programmes in Iraq can be found at www.dfid.gov.uk.

Free Trade

8. **Mr. Bacon:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the Government's policy is on the merits of free trade in relieving poverty. [212235]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: We believe that fairer and freer trade rules will contribute significantly to tackling poverty.

Developing countries are heavily punished by the trade barriers that rich countries maintain.

It is for this reason that my right hon. Friend and I are working with other colleagues across Government for continued progress in the Doha Development Round of the WTO process.

Disaster Relief Areas

10. **Mr. Heath:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is on developing continuing relationships between communities in the United Kingdom and those in disaster relief areas. [212237]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID supports disaster prone countries around the world with disaster risk reduction programmes at the regional, country and community level and is always ready to provide immediate humanitarian assistance when disasters strike, and support subsequent recovery and reconstruction efforts. Many UK communities have existing links with communities in disaster prone areas, and in such cases it makes good sense to build on that relationship by offering support to the overseas community. Where no such relationship exists, there may well be further scope for developing twinning arrangements with the aim of providing practical support. A first step for those wishing to establish such community links would be to consult the relevant UK embassies and high commissions, and UK-based community organisations of the relevant countries.

Tsunami

12. **Mr. Tredinnick:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on reconstruction in countries affected by the Indian ocean tsunami. [212240]

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on reconstruction in countries affected by the Indian ocean tsunami. [212239]

Hilary Benn: In addition to the £75 million that DFID has already committed for immediate relief in the aftermath of the tsunami, we will also make a contribution to the longer-term rehabilitation of the regions affected. This is likely to focus on providing support to rebuilding livelihoods and services for poor people.

The governments of the countries affected by the tsunami are completing needs assessments with the support of the World Bank and others. DFID's plans for longer-term reconstruction will be formulated in response to these assessments in order to ensure that our assistance forms part of a properly co-ordinated reconstruction plan.

Zimbabwe

13. **David Burnside**: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development how much aid has been received by Zimbabwe in the 2004–05 financial year; and if he will make a statement. [212241]

Hilary Benn: DFID expects to spend £25 million in Zimbabwe during 2004–05 compared with £34 million in 2003–04. DFID assistance has given priority to tackling HIV and AIDS, which affects some 25 per cent. of the adult population. We also continue to provide food, seeds, fertilisers and other practical forms of relief to some 1.5 million of the poorest people in Zimbabwe through international NGOs and the UN. The Government of Zimbabwe claim there was a bumper harvest last year and have therefore sharply scaled back international food aid. This claim has been contradicted by independent surveys, UN agencies and other agencies are monitoring food needs closely.

Sustainable Forestry (Africa)

14. **Paddy Tipping**: To ask the Secretary of State, Department for International Development what steps he is taking to help to secure sustainable forestry in Africa. [212242]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is currently helping to develop forest policy, implement reforms, and strengthen forest governance in Ghana, Cameroon, Malawi, Kenya and South Africa. DFID recently designed a new £12 million programme of work on forest governance and trade in west and central Africa. This will continue to focus on reforms in Ghana and Cameroon, where EU Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) partnership agreements offer the opportunity to bring EU consumer market forces into play. We are also supporting civil society strengthening and dialogue between governments, the private sector and NGOs in the Congo Basin region. Later this year we will begin a programme that supports links between the private sector in four African countries and European trade federations. Our aim is to increase the awareness of African companies to new market requirements and opportunities.

Angola

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact on *(a)* the amount of food donated by international donors and *(b)* the amount of food available to the population of Angola of the law which came into effect in December 2004 in Angola prohibiting the import and use of genetically modified crops; and if he will make a statement. [212160]

Hilary Benn: Over the past year the international community in Angola has steadily reduced food aid contributions in line with the country's decreasing humanitarian needs and increasing crop production. As most donors provide cash funding to the World Food Programme (WFP), there has been no direct link between the reduction of food aid and the new law banning the introduction of genetically modified (GM) foods. When the new law was announced in March 2004, the USA replaced a food aid shipment of 19,000 tonnes of GM maize with 14,000 tonnes of non-GM sorghum. WFP uses donor funds to buy non-GM maize, beans and other food items in the southern Africa region. WFP has sufficient food in its warehouses to help Angola's 900,000 most vulnerable people until the end of March.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the tendering process under the law implemented in December 2004 for contracts to mill food aid entering Angola; and if he will make a statement. [212163]

Hilary Benn: No tendering processes have yet been established by the Government of Angola as there are no plans to introduce genetically modified (GM) foods for milling into Angola. Angola has limited capacity to mill any cereals and is unable to do so on an industrial scale. The World Food Programme (WFP) runs two small mills, one in Luanda and another in Lobito, which it uses to mill maize. Until now, WFP has not received any genetically modified (GM) products for milling, although they do have restricted capacity to do so.

Commission for Africa

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the findings of the Commission for Africa will be presented to Parliament. [211167]

Hilary Benn: The members of the Commission for Africa are still working on their report and have not yet set a date for publication. Subject to discussion at the next full meeting of the Commission on 24 February, a decision would be made on the presentation of the report due to be published around the middle of March.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211659]

Hilary Benn: DFID Expenditure on external consultants was as follows:

	£ million	*Percentage of aid programme*
1996–97	161	8
2003–04	213	5

We do not forecast future spending on this item but all costs will be contained within agreed contractual limits.

Darfur

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of UK aid to Darfur during recent months. [212236]

Hilary Benn: UK aid is delivered to Darfur through UN agencies, NGOs, and international organisations, the effectiveness of which is monitored through regular field visits by the British Embassy in Khartoum and the Sudan Unit, and UN reports and evaluations. I am satisfied that we are doing all that we can under difficult circumstances. For example, the joint DFID-UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund) evaluation of December 2004, said the response by UN agencies, NGOs and donors was inadequate through to early 2004, but that humanitarian assistance is now getting through. It described the situation since October 2004 as "stabilising".

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211613]

Hilary Benn: No contracts have been awarded to EDS in the last two years. Fujitsu were awarded one contract to maintain Video Conference facilities for one year from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004, at a cost of £152,098. The contract was awarded under a competitive Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Framework Agreement.

DFID has also purchased equipment from Fujitsu using the OGC Framework Agreement.

Free Trade (Agriculture)

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the economic effects on developing countries of allowing free trade in agricultural products. [212132]

Hilary Benn: DFID has supported a range of research examining the economic effects on developing countries of allowing free trade in agricultural products.

This includes work on the impact of EU Dairy reform on developing countries and on Food Security, Trade and Livelihoods Links. DFID also funds the World Bank Trade Policy Development Project (TPDP) that includes analysis of agricultural liberalisation, as well as work at the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation on impacts of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) agricultural policies on developing countries.

The general results of such research are that in the short term, costs and benefits are estimated to vary across producers and consumers and net exporters and importers. However, in the long term, developing countries will gain from freer world trade in agricultural products.

In the short term it is estimated that developing countries that are net importers of food may see price rises when export subsidies are removed. Countries that benefit from the current distortions in global agricultural trade would also lose out (for example those that export products to the EU, receiving the same distorted higher price that EU producers receive).

However, in the long term producers should benefit from higher prices and take advantage of lower tariffs to increase their exports. Studies have shown that liberalisation of all OECD farm policies would boost global agricultural trade volume by over 50 per cent. Also, following liberalisation, higher exports have boosted the agricultural component of economic growth in countries like Vietnam and Uganda at 4.6 per cent. and 4.4 per cent. per year respectively. This has also led to an increase in agricultural incomes and significant reductions in rural poverty.

Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunisation

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding his Department has provided to the Global Alliance for Vaccination and Immunisation (GAVI) in each of the last five years. [213079]

Hilary Benn: DFID has supported the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisations (GAVI) since its inception in 2000. We provided an initial grant of £3 million in 2000 and from 2001 to date we have pledged some £35 million of which £28 million has already been disbursed. A further £7 million will be contributed in 2005–06. DFID's total contribution represents 5 per cent. of the total grants to GAVI.

The figures are broken down as follows:

£ million

	Amount
2000–01	3
2001–02	10.5
2002–03	3.5
2003–04	7
2004–05	7

Heavily Indebted Poor Countries

Mr. Alan Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what proportion of EU aid in each of the last five years was spent in heavily indebted poor countries. [210308]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The proportion of European Union aid going to countries eligible to receive relief through the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative is listed in the following tables. The tables show the percentage of Official Development Assistance (ODA) going to HIPC eligible countries, and also the percentage of both ODA and Official Assistance (OA)[1] combined. Table 1 contains data on EU member states aid only, while Table 2 provides the same information for European Commission aid. In 2003, 56 per cent. of allocated EC ODA went to low-income countries, an increase on 51 per cent. in 2002.

Table 1

EU Members, Total	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
HIPC percentage ODA	31	35	37	38	45
HIPC percentage total aid (ODA + OA)	29	31	33	34	41

Table 2

European Commission	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
HIPC percentage ODA	25	22	28	31	35
HIPC percentage total aid (ODA + OA)	16	13	19	23	23

Source:
Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

[1] As defined by the DAC, ODA is donor assistance to developing countries, while OA is donor assistance to countries in transition.

HIV/AIDS Orphans

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking to ensure that civil society, including faith-based organisations, in developing countries are able to access resources for meeting the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and Aids. [210999]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: We fully recognise the key contribution that civil society organisations (CSO) have to play in tackling HIV and AIDS. We are therefore actively working to promote CSO involvement in national AIDS responses. We are, for example, working to find ways to help the flow of resources from National AIDS Commissions to NGOs and CSOs. These, including faith-based organisations, have an important role in helping to meet the needs of children affected by AIDS—orphans and vulnerable children—in terms of protection, care and support.

At the Global Partners' Forum on orphans and vulnerable children held in Washington DC in December 2004, I announced how the UK would meet our target of spending at least £150 million over the next three years to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Most of this will be spent in Africa where the impacts of AIDS on children are most severe. We will mainly be providing funds though our country programmes to support national responses. We are already providing funds through NGOs to support vulnerable children in Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In a number of countries, such as Kenya and Zimbabwe, we are supporting the rapid assessment, analysis and action plan processes which have been led by UNICEF; effective civil society involvement in their implementation is an important issue for us. We are also in the process of developing support to UNICEF to work at both country level and in the case of southern Africa at sub-regional level to develop and implement national OVC action plans. We will be working with UNICEF to ensure that civil society organisations are appropriately included in these programmes.

An additional means of ensuring that civil society organisations are appropriately involved in responding to the needs of children affected by AIDS will be provided as we renew our agreements with key UK NGOs such as HelpAge International and Save the Children to include relevant AIDS-related work as a key objective. Out of the 18 partnership agreements we have with UK-based NGOs, 14 have specific objectives on HIV and AIDS. We will also increase our Civil Society Challenge Fund from £10 million to £14 million in 2005 and encourage proposals from NGOs wanting to provide support in this field.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government will take during its G8 and EU presidencies to fulfill the commitment to champion the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and Aids set out in the strategy for tackling HIV and Aids. [211001]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: We will use our Presidencies of the G8 and the EU to increase action on AIDS. This will include attention to the situation of children affected by the pandemic, the orphans and vulnerable children. Committing resources to implement the "Framework for the protection, care and support of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) living in a world with HIV and AIDS", which is the global guidance developed by UNICEF and partners and widely endorsed by the international community, including DFID, is key. The framework is being translated into national OVC action plans—16 have been developed in Sub-Saharan Africa and more are being planned.

DFID has announced a commitment to spend at least £150 million over three years on OVCs (of which £44 million will go to UNICEF for the development and implementation of national OVC action plans). We will be encouraging other G8 and EU member states to increase their support to national programmes. The USA has, like us, already earmarked funding and endorsed the framework as have Germany and Denmark. Canada and France also see OVCs as a priority issue, yet others have not yet followed this line.

Along with other member states we are engaging in the consultation process towards a new Programme for Action on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis which the EC expects to adopt in 2006. The current Programme for Action does not address orphans and vulnerable children and we will consider how best to address this gap in the forthcoming consultations. Discussions on the new EU Development Policy have only just started. The Commission has produced a "Consultation on the future of EU Development Policy Issues Paper", which includes consideration of the broad themes of "Development of human resources and citizens' rights' and "Combating inequality and promoting social cohesion", both of which are likely to include consideration of orphans and vulnerable children. Consultations with members of the European Parliament and other member states will take place in due course.

Israel, Syria and Iran

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what the average *(a)* income levels, *(b)* life expectancy, *(c)* per capita funding for education and *(d)* unemployment rate for (i) Israelis, (ii) Palestinians and (iii) Bedouins within Israel were in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [211758]

(2) what the average *(a)* income levels, *(b)* life expectancy, *(c)* per capita funding for education and *(d)* unemployment rate for (i) Syrians, (ii) Kurds and (iii) Armenians within Syria were in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement; [211759]

(3) what the average *(a)* income levels, *(b)* life expectancy, *(c)* per capita funding for education and *(d)* unemployment rate for (i) Persians, (ii) Azeris and (iii) Kurds within Iran were in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211760]

Hilary Benn: Statistics for the four countries requested are shown below. Breakdown by ethnic group in Israel, Syria and Iran is not readily available. DFID does not have a programme of assistance in any of these three countries.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Income per capita (constant 1995 US$)							
Israelis	16,743	16,899	16,910	17,710	17,141	16,676	16,540
Palestinians	1,423	1,477	1,523	1,442	1,163	905	857
Syria	807	836	808	793	800	805	806
Iran	1,566	1,572	1,587	1,658	1,723	1,819	1,899
Life expectancy (at birth)							
Israelis	78	—	—	78	—	79	—
Palestinians	71	71	—	72	—	73	—
Syria	69	—	—	70	—	—	—
Iran	68	—	—	69	—	—	—
Education (approximate per capita US$)							
Israelis	—	1,301	1,268	1,293	—	—	—
Palestinians	—	70	64	70	—	—	—
Syria	23	31	28	—	33	—	—
Iran	—	72	73	73	86	—	—
Unemployment rate (Percentage)							
Israelis	7.7	8.5	8.9	8.8	9.3	10.3	10.7
Palestinians	20.1	14.4	11.8	14.2	25.5	31.3	25.6
Syria	—	—	—	—	11.2	—	—
Iran	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Microenterprises

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the impact of microenterprises on the economic development of developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [212161]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: A very large proportion of poor households own or work in microenterprises in the informal economy. In Africa, informal work is estimated to have accounted for almost 80 per cent. of non-agricultural employment and over 90 per cent. of new jobs. For women in Sub-Saharan Africa, the informal economy represents 92 per cent. of job opportunities outside agriculture.

DFID has supported microenterprise development directly through financial services, skills, technology and buyers, and indirectly through an improved policy and legal operating environment for microenterprises. DFID's current commitments to microfinance development projects in Asia and Africa total approximately £50 million. DFID supports country investment climate assessments, and contributed to the "World Development Report 2005: A Better Investment Climate for Everyone" that highlights how governments can promote investment, productivity and job growth.

Most microenterprises operate informally, making collecting reliable data on their impact very difficult. However, microenterprises clearly play an important role in developing economies. The average share of the informal enterprise sector in non-agricultural official GDP varies from 27 per cent. in Northern Africa to 41 per cent. in Sub-Saharan Africa. We do know however that many poor individuals would much prefer less risky employment in larger enterprises or the public sector, than self employment in microenterprises.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many courses in the adult and continuing education sector were offered in each of the last 10 years. [208068]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There is no centrally held information on the number of courses offered. I have set out separately the numbers of learners in (i) adult and community learning and adult education courses run through local education authorities; (ii) LearnDirect; and (iii) Skills for Life, in the following tables.

Adult education enrolments at 1 November 1993 to 2002 by accreditation, England

Thousand

	Former schedule 2—leading to an accredited qualification	*Former non schedule 2—not leading to an accredited qualification*	*All enrolments*
1993	268	829	1,097
1994	370	714	1,084
1995	326	828	1,153
1996	350	882	1,232
1997	331	731	1,062
1998	370	745	1,115
1999	332	722	1,054
2000	375	666	1,041
2001	374	679	1,052
2002	380	662	1,042

Source:
Local education authorities

The table covers adult enrolments on courses offered by local education authorities (LEAs). In April 2001, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) assumed funding responsibility for both LEA-secured adult and community learning and for former Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) funded provision. For 2003/04, the LSC introduced a new approach to collecting data on adult and community learning. The new data collection is more harmonised with other LSC funded learning (for example further education) and allows more flexible analysis. However, it is not possible to form a consistent historical series from the old and new data collections. Using the new data and methods, in 2003/04, a total of 842,000 learners were enrolled on Adult and Community Learning programmes.

The figures in the following table show the numbers of learners on LearnDirect provision in England in each year since 2000/01, the earliest year for which figures are available.

Learners on LearnDirect provision, England

Thousand

Academic year	*Learner*
2000/01	78
2001/02	340
2002/03	450
2003/04	511

Source:
LearnDirect

The final table shows the number of enrolments on Skills for Life courses in England since 2000/01—the earliest year for which figures are available.

Enrolments on skills for life courses, England

Thousand

Academic year	*Enrolment*
2000/01	726
2001/02	1,068
2002/03	1,295
2003/04	1,438

Education Maintenance Allowances

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in Hartlepool have been in receipt of education maintenance allowances in each year since the scheme was introduced. [213288]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following figures give the number of students aged 16–18 years who were resident in Hartlepool LEA and who received an education maintenance allowance. The pilot began operating in Hartlepool in September 2000.

Academic year	*Total number of 16 to 18-year-olds*
2000–01	351
2001–02	832
2002–03	927
2003–04	933

By 31 December 2005, 944 young people who were resident in Hartlepool had received an education maintenance allowance as part of the first year of the National scheme.

Higher Education Entrants

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of 18-year-olds resident in Burnley entered higher education in the academic year 2002//03. [210966]

Dr. Howells: The recent HEFCE publication "Young participation in higher education" (HEFCE 2005/03) looks at the proportion of young people who enter higher education at age 18 or 19 by parliamentary constituency. A discussion of the participation divisions and trends (18-year-olds in 1994 to 18-year-olds in 2000) for constituencies is contained in the report (sections 2.12, 3.8 and 4.1).

In addition, participation rates for parliamentary constituencies based on this work are given on the supporting POLAR website (www.hefce.ac.uk/polar). These indicate that, for the cohorts reaching 18 between 1997 and 1999, 23 per cent. of young people living in Burnley constituency entered higher education at age 18 or 19 (the English average for these cohorts is 29 per cent.).

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entrants has there been to higher education establishments from schools within the London borough of Wandsworth in each of the last three years. [211059]

Dr. Howells: The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18-year-old applicants accepted through UCAS to full-time first degree and HMD courses. Figures for Wandsworth are given in the table.

18-year-old applicants, domiciled in Wandsworth LEA, accepted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) onto full-time undergraduate courses at UK HE institutions

Year of entry	*Accepted applicants*
2001	501
2002	514
2003	523

Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

International Students

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect on the UK's ability to recruit international students by increased charges for visa extensions as proposed by the Home Office. [213308]

Dr. Howells: In September 2004 a joint project team—comprising representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the British Council—was asked to improve the evidence base around international students, and to undertake an assessment of the likely impact of increased leave to remain fees to attract more international students to the UK.

The outcomes of this work will be made available, alongside a regulatory impact assessment for the education sector, when the Government announce their response to the Home Office Consultation on "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications".

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase the attractiveness of studying in the UK to international students. [213309]

Dr. Howells: We recognise the importance of international students to the UK and this is reflected in the DfES International Strategy. We are considering a range of options for the future recruitment of international students in consultation with our funding partners and other stakeholders.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure by her Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211674]

Derek Twigg: Expenditure on the Department's central advertising and publicity budget is set out as follows.

In addition to expenditure from this central budget, expenditure from budgets allocated to individual programmes will also include spend on publicity related activity. It is not possible, except at disproportionate cost, to separately identify all such publicity related expenditure.

It is, however, possible to identify separately the Department's total expenditure on advertising, and this is set out as follows.

Advertising and publicity budget

	£000
1996–97	n/a
1997–98	10,879
2003–04	15,500
2004–05	[1]15,108

[1] The figure for 2004–05 is the estimate of expenditure for the current financial year.

Total departmental spend on advertising

	£000[1]
1996–97	7,538
1997–98	9,992
2003–04	11,210
2004–05	n/a

n/a = costs not available at this point.
[1] These figures include spend on advertising from the central advertising and publicity budget.

Financial information for years beyond 2004–05 is yet to be formally agreed.

Specialist College Status (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in the Coventry area have specialist college status. [211985]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Of the 19 maintained secondary schools in Coventry LEA, 12 are designated specialist schools. This includes two which were successful in the latest application round, announced on 26 January.

Youth Clubs/Services

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many youth clubs were available for young people to use in *(a)* England, *(b)* Kirklees and *(c)* Huddersfield in each of the last 10 years. [211622]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Youth clubs are delivered locally by local authority youth services and National and local Voluntary youth organisations. Information is not held centrally on the number of youth clubs run by each individual local authority.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was available for youth services in *(a)* England and *(b)* Kirklees in each of the last 10 years. [211699]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The main source of funding for the Youth Service in the past has been within the local government finance settlement and part of the Education Standard Spending Assessment/Formula Spending Shares. Until 2003–04 there was no separately identifiable funding for the Youth Service. From 2003–04 and the introduction of Formula Spending Shares, there has been a Youth and Community sub-block containing unhypothecated resources for the

Youth Service, among other items. The figures for England and Kirklees for the Youth and Community sub-block are in the following table. The local authority decides how much of this is spent on the Youth Service.

£ million

	England (including Kirklees)	*Kirklees*
2003–04	513	4.3
2004–05	539	4.5
2005–06	570	4.7

The Transforming Youth Work Development Fund (TYWDF) provided the following levels of public funding for youth services in England and Kirklees during the years 2002–05

£ million

	England (including Kirklees)	*Kirklees*
2002–03	20	169,787
2003–04	8.8	65,627
2004–05	8.5	67,556

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) Fund provided the following levels of public funding for youth services in England and Kirklees during the years 2002–05

£ million

	England (including Kirklees)	*Kirklees*
2002–03	7	57,334
2003–04	8	65,439
2004–05	5.5	44,989

CABINET OFFICE

Crown Servants (Pensions)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many former crown servants including defence personnel are in receipt of state pensions; and how many of those are payable *(a)* within the United Kingdom, *(b)* outside the United Kingdom and *(c)* in Zimbabwe. [213336]

Mr. Miliband: Information on crown servants who are in receipt of pensions is not collected centrally. However, the civil service pension arrangements provide pensions to people who were formerly employed by Government Departments and agencies. The arrangements also provide pensions to people who were formerly employed as office holders or who worked for certain non-Crown bodies such as non-departmental public bodies. Pensions for the armed forces are the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence.

As at 31 December 2004, 534,932 pensions were payable under the civil service pension arrangements to people resident in the United Kingdom. A further 14,301 were payable to non-UK residents, of whom 13 were resident in Zimbabwe. These figures include pensions payable to widows and widowers.

Newspapers/Periodicals

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will list the *(a)* newspapers and *(b)* periodicals taken by his Department in each year since 1997; and how much the Department spent on each in each year. [207637]

Mr. Miliband: Estimated expenditure on newspapers and periodicals for the Department in each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

£

	Estimated expenditure
1997–98	51,000
1998–99	27,000
1999–2000	16,000
2000–01	76,000
2001–02	73,000
2002–03	90,000
2003–04	75,000

These figures have been taken from expenditure paid to the Department's central supplier of newspapers and periodicals; however, units within the Cabinet Office may use their own arrangements to make such purchases. In these instances the information is not recorded centrally and is available only at disproportionate cost.

Public Service Reform

David Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what recent discussions he has had with officials from the public sector unions on public service reform. [211885]

Mr. Milburn *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* As Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster I have not held formal discussions with public sector unions on the subject of public services reform. However, my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband) chairs regular meetings of the Public Services Forum (PSF) which bring together public service unions and employers to discuss reform issues. The forum, established in September 2003 aims to improve the dialogue between unions, Government and public service employers on public services reform.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Age Discrimination

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to protect workers over 65 years from unfair dismissal. [213209]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Under current unfair dismissal rules, employees of any age are entitled to make certain types of unfair dismissal claims where dismissal is for specified reasons. Employees cannot make general unfair dismissal complaints, however, if they have reached their employer's normal retirement age, or, in the absence of a normal retirement age, the age of 65. In its last consultation on the forthcoming age regulations, "Age Matters", the Government proposed to abolish this upper age limit. This would mean that employees of all ages would be able to complain about any unfair dismissal. However, dismissal at a justified retirement age for the reason of retirement will potentially be a fair dismissal.

The Government are currently finalising proposals on this matter in the course of preparing regulations to outlaw unjustified age discrimination in employment and vocational training. It aims to consult on the draft regulations later this year. The regulations will come into force on 1 October 2006.

Airbus A380

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment her Department has made of the potential for job creation in the UK of the Airbus A380 Project. [213223]

Jacqui Smith: In March 2000, the Government announced that the A380 project was expected to generate, directly and indirectly, some 22,000 new jobs as well as helping to safeguard a further 62,000 jobs on existing Airbus programmes in the UK.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the UK contribution to date has been to the development of the Airbus A380; and how many aircraft will need to be sold for the investment to be recouped. [211384]

Jacqui Smith: HMG has contributed £530 million in repayable Launch Investment to Airbus UK for the design and development of the wings for the A380. The terms of the investment are commercially confidential.

HMG is a strong supporter of Airbus and provided financial support for the A320 and A330/340 programmes. Both have been successful in the market, have repaid their original investment and are contributing strong extra receipts to the Exchequer.

Bank Accounts

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to assist people who are unable to open bank accounts due to a lack of key identification documents, with particular reference to *(a)* the elderly, *(b)* the disabled and *(c)* non-UK nationals. [213389]

Mr. Timms: I have been ask to reply.

The Money Laundering Regulations 2003 require the banks to satisfy themselves as to the identity of their customers. It is important to foster an identification regime that does not constrain access to financial services and deals sensibly and sensitively with special groups.

The UK approach to anti-money laundering controls is flexible and risk-based with controls imposed in a cost-effective and proportionate way. High-level objectives are set out in the Money Laundering Regulations but the details of implementation are left to industry-produced guidance. In the case of the banks this is the Joint Money Laundering Steering Group (JMLSG) Guidance Notes. The JMLSG Guidance Notes provide flexibility for vulnerable groups such as the disabled, those in care homes or sheltered accommodation, and for foreign nationals. The Financial Services Authority (FSA) Money Laundering Sourcebook also includes guidance on financial exclusion, which aims to help relevant firms ensure that, where people cannot reasonably be expected to produce detailed evidence of identity, they are not denied access to financial services, and are able to prove their identity by alternative means.

Last year, FSA set up a working group of key stakeholders to look at the identification issue. The group comprises representatives of trade bodies and practitioners, consumers, government, law enforcement, credit reference agencies and forensic consultants. As part of this work, the FSA published a report in October on customer identification, "ID—defusing the issue: A progress report", making proposals to the JMLSG. It proposed in particular including in a revised version of the JMLSG guidance notes, the scope for greater reliance on a single document to confirm ID and how firms should use electronic verification services methods.

Canatxx

Mr. Dawson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions her Department has had with Canatxx Gas Storage Ltd. and Canatxx Energy Ventures Ltd. with regard to their proposal for a new gas storage facility at Preesall Sawfield, Lancashire. [211592]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 1 February 2005]*: As with other major gas infrastructure projects, my officials have had regular and frequent contacts with the company, in order to understand the project, its potential contribution to the operation of the GB gas market, and the extent to which it faces avoidable regulatory barriers. Records indicate my officials have met with representatives of Canatxx seven times since the project was bought to our attention in 2002. The meetings were as follows:

17 April 2002—to alert DTI to the project

23 September 2002—to discuss proposals for the Preesall gas storage project

22 May 2003—project update

12 January 2004—project update

12 February 2004—project update

2 September 2004—project update on NTS capacity and the project schedule

3 December 2004—to introduce a new financial partner

7 December 2004—Canatxx also were represented at a meeting to update existing and potential gas storage facilities on gas quality issues.

Company Insolvency

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans there are to protect funds owed to employees when a company goes into liquidation. [213362]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Former employees of insolvent employers can claim redundancy payments, basic awards for unfair dismissal, protective awards and awards of other contractual debts such as unpaid wages, notice pay and outstanding holiday pay from

Redundancy Payments Offices. Trustees of pension funds can claim for unpaid contributions on both the employer and employees' behalf. All payments are subject to statutory limits. Amounts over the statutory limits can be lodged as debts in the insolvency.

Energy Policy

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of developments in the renewable energy industry in *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the UK since 1997; and if she will make a statement on the Government's plans for renewable energy development in (i) Scotland and (ii) the UK. [213150]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The prospects for renewables in Scotland is very good.

In 2003 the Renewables Advisory Board commissioned the Supply Chain Gap analysis to look at the state of the renewables industry within Scotland and the rest of the UK. The aim of the study is to assist agencies in determining the most effective means of targeting their effort and resources. This report made a number of recommendations for renewables both in Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Government have set a target that by 2010, 10 per cent. of electricity will be generated from renewable sources and an aspiration to double this by 2020. 10 per cent. of supply from renewables in 2010 would save approximately 2.5 MtC per year if the equivalent amount of energy were generated from gas. This is a UK target with specific Scottish issues being a matter for the Scottish Executive.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department has taken *(a)* to export renewable energy technologies developed within the United Kingdom to the developing world and *(b)* to market advancements in the field of renewable energy overseas; and if she will make a statement. [213151]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has a Trade Promotion Service, specifically for renewable energy, which works closely with UK Trade and Investment, to facilitate the export and technology transfer of renewable energy into markets around the world.

This service works in both the developing and developed countries and responds to all requests for support from UK companies wishing to export, however it is targeting developing countries in Asia, Thailand, Indonesia and China for example, and has helped companies in both South America and Africa.

The service targets developing countries with strong political and fiscal policies for the development of renewable energy and which provide the best opportunity for UK business to succeed.

Fuel Poverty

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate she has made of the likely change in the number of households containing young children that are fuel poor as a result of recent increases in energy prices; [213319]

(2) what measures are being taken to alleviate the impact on fuel poverty in households containing young children of recent increases in energy prices. [213320]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The number of people in fuel poverty fell by three million, from 5.25 million in 1997 to 2.25 million in 2003.

Analysis of the overall effects of changes in fuel prices and incomes suggests that the total number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty is likely to rise by a limited amount in 2004 and 2005—perhaps by up to 200,000 households in England, where vulnerable households are defined as those containing children, the elderly, the disabled or someone with long term sickness. It is not possible to break this figure down further.

Data from the 2001 English House Condition Survey show that 15 per cent. of the 1.4 million vulnerable fuel poor households contained young children.

Responsibility for tackling fuel poverty is devolved, and therefore the devolved administrations will be looking at how they each will meet their fuel poverty targets. In England, families claiming certain income and disability-related benefits with young children are eligible for assistance under Defra's Warm Front programme.

Launch Aid

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid by her Department in launch aid in each year since 1997; how much has been repaid since 1997; and if she will make a statement on the effect of the aid on the creation of jobs. [212093]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's continued support through Launch Investment (LI) has secured high value jobs in the most important civil aerospace programme in the UK. It has been estimated that the support since 1997 would generate and safeguard over 100,000 jobs over the life of the programmes on new civil aerospace programmes in the UK. These are long-term programmes (more than 30 years) and therefore the precise number of jobs generated and safeguarded would not be known for some time.

The following figures are the payments and receipts for LI for the years 1997–98 to 2003–04 inclusive.

£ million

Financial year	*Payments*	*Receipts*
1997–98	57.9	123.1
1998–99	50	177
1999–2000	66.4	201
2000–01	52.6	147.8
2001–02	188.7	142.5
2002–03	258.2	108.2
2003–04	323.6	108.2
Total	997.4	1007.8

Rural Post Offices

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern

Ireland fall within her Department's definition of rural post offices; and what percentage that represents of the total number of post offices in each case. [212000]

Mr. Sutcliffe: This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial support her Department has given to the Swan Hunter Shipyard in each of the last five years. [212051]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Gosport (Mr. Viggers) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 148W.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what obligations she plans to place on the producers of business waste electrical and electronic equipment to finance the building up of the separate collection of such equipment. [212206]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Government are working with all stakeholders to implement the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) directive to achieve the maximum environmental benefit at the least cost. The WEEE directive specifies that producers of electrical and electronic equipment (EEE), sold on a business to business (B2B) basis, should be responsible for the costs relating to its collection, treatment, recovery and environmentally sound disposal. Producers will finance B2B EEE they place on the market, although they will be free to agree alternative contractual arrangements with their customers. Business end users will have responsibility for disposing of EEE placed on the market before 13 August 2005, which is not being replaced on a like for like basis. If the equipment is being replaced, it will become the responsibility of the producer supplying the new equipment.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the likely collection rate for operation schemes dealing with business compliance with the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [212207]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: We estimate that in 2006 there may be approximately 1,250,000 tonnes in total of WEEE arising in the UK. Industry estimates suggest that over 600,000 tonnes of this WEEE may be separately collected at present. A figure for WEEE arising from business users only is not currently available.

Wind Farms

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* examined into the low frequency noise impact of wind turbines. [210474]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* There are four main studies on the impact of low frequency noises of wind turbines that have been commissioned and examined by my Department, which are:

The Assessment and Rating of Noise from Wind Farms, published 1996;

Noise emission from wind turbines, published 1999;

Aerodynamic noise reduction for variable speed turbines, published 2000, and

Assessment of the Effects of Noise and Vibration from Offshore Wind Farms on Marine Wildlife, published 2001.

Two others studies that have been commissioned and are both due to report in spring 2005 are:

Study into the Effects of Wind Farms on the Eskdalemuir Seismic Array (joint study with MOD and BWEA); and

The measurement and assessment of low frequency noise from three UK wind farms.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her policy is on the separation distances required for the erection of wind turbine pylons over 100 metres in height. [210475]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* How wind turbines are set out and the distance between each turbine on any wind farm is a matter for the developer to propose on a case-by-case basis.

There are obvious technical reasons for a certain distance between each turbine. It needs to be compact enough to minimise the capital cost, and big enough for adequate separations to lessen energy loss through wind shadowing from upstream machines. It is usual for there to be a distance between the turbines of around 3–10 rotor diameters The issue of wind farms and their proximity to dwellings and roads should be considered at the planning stage of individual developments and will be subject to policies in the local authority's development plan and the national policies set out in Planning Policy Statement 22 (PPS22).

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in improving women's rights in Afghanistan. [211984]

Mr. Rammell: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow, Govan (Mr. Sarwar) on 1 February (UIN 211279).

Armament Sales (China)

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment his Department has made of human rights in China. [210079]

Mr. Alexander: Over the last 15 years the Chinese Government has done much to help reduce poverty levels within China and promote economic improvements for its citizens. This effort to develop has led in some cases to an improvement in basic freedoms for citizens, e.g. there is more freedom to move around the country and outside the country. However, we remain concerned about many aspects of the human rights situation in China. A detailed assessment can be found in the most recent Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Human Rights Report for 2004 available at www.fco.gov.uk/humanrightsreport2004 and in the Library of the House.

Burma

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many reports his Department has received of crimes against humanity committed by the government of Burma in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211783]

Mr. Alexander: The British Government are one of the strongest critics of the Burmese regime's abuses of human rights. We are aware of a consistent pattern of serious violations over many years, particularly against ethnic groups. These have been highlighted in successive UK co-sponsored resolutions on Burma in the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. But we do not consider that the atrocities constitute "crimes against humanity", which have specific definitions under international law. Nor does the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, use these terms to describe the situation there.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department's travel advice with regard to Burma was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement. [211784]

Mr. Alexander: Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Advice for Burma was last updated on 7 January 2005 and remains under regular review.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the number of UK citizens travelling to Burma in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211785]

Mr. Alexander: According to available statistics the number of visits from the UK to Burma remains at a level similar to 1997:

	Number of visits
1997	4,081
1998	4,629
1999	4,479
2000	1,378
2001	2,533
2002–03	3,098
2003–04	4,500

It is our policy not to encourage tourism to Burma. We have drawn to the attention of travel organisations the views of the Burmese Democratic Movement that tourism is inappropriate at present due to the political and human rights situation there. As part of this policy, Burmese tourism officials are included in the European Union visa ban and asset freeze.

For as long as such human rights violations continue, we would urge anyone who may be thinking of visiting Burma on holiday to consider carefully whether by their actions they are helping to support the regime and prolong such serious abuses.

Burundi

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the massacre at Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi on 13 August 2004; and if he will make a statement. [211418]

Mr. Alexander: We were outraged by the atrocity committed at Gatumba on 13 August 2004, in which Congolese refugees, mainly Banyamulenge women and children, were targeted. Over 150 were killed.

We and our international partners condemned the massacre in UN Security Council Presidential Statement 2004/30, and urged the UN and the Burundian Government to conduct urgent investigations.

Following the conclusion of the UN's investigations, the international community reiterated its commitment to bringing the perpetrators of the massacre to justice and ending impunity in the Great Lakes region in Security Council Resolution 1577 (2004).

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of alleged Mai Mai and Rwandan Hutu militia involvement in the massacre at Gatumba refugee camp in Burundi on 13 August 2004; and if he will make a statement. [211419]

Mr. Alexander: The Burundian rebel group, the Forces Nationales de Liberation (FNL), claimed responsibility for the Gatumba massacre. Reports from several sources, including survivors, suggested that the massacre was perpetrated by a group containing elements of FNL, Congolese Mai-Mai and Ex-Forces Armees Rwandaises (FAR)/Interahamwe forces.

Investigations by the United Nations uncovered some evidence implicating Mai-Mai and Ex-FAR/Interahamwe. However, the UN's final report on the massacre said that there was not sufficient evidence to prove Mai-Mai and Ex-FAR/Interahamwe involvement.

Ending impunity in the Great Lakes remains a UK priority and we continue to push for the perpetrators of the Gatumba massacre and other atrocities in the region to be brought to justice.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members of (i) the Government of Burundi and (ii) the armed forces of Burundi concerning the security needs of refugee (A) camps and (B) groups in Burundi, with particular reference to the Banyamulenge; and if he will make a statement. [211420]

Mr. Alexander: The UK, working together with the United Nations and other international partners, has made clear to the Burundian authorities, including the armed forces, of the need to protect refugees of all communities living on Burundian territory.

Both before and following the massacre at Gatumba on 13 August 2004, we, along with international partners and the UN Mission in Burundi, urged the Burundian authorities to take additional steps to improve the security situation of refugees, such as moving camps holding Banyamulenge groups away from border areas. However, many Banyamulenge wanted to remain as close to their homes in South Kivu as possible.

Central Africa

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the scale and *(b)* the nature of activity by the Conseil national pour la défense de la democratie/Forces pour la défense de la democratie in (i) the Democratic Republic of the Congo, (ii) Tanzania and (iii) Burundi since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211446]

Mr. Alexander: The Conseil National pour la Defense de la Democratie/Forces pour la Defense de la Democratie (CNDD-FDD) is a former rebel group that operated in Burundi, from Democratic Republic of Congo territory and was alleged to have infiltrated Burundian refugee camps in Tanzania.

Although the CNDD-FDD was not party to the Burundian peace agreement of August 2000 (the Arusha Accord), it subsequently signed ceasefire agreements with the Transitional Government of Burundi in December 2002 and November 2003. Its leaders have since joined the Transitional Government and are working towards elections by 30 April 2005. Its forces are being integrated into the new national army.

EU Constitution

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many copies of the Commentary on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, released on 26 January, have been published; what the final projected print-run is; what the per-unit publishing cost is; and what the total budget for the publication is. [213187]

Mr. Straw: 200 copies of the Commentary on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe were printed prior to introduction of the EU Bill on 26 January to ensure sufficient copies were available in the Libraries of both Houses. Subject to demand, we plan to publish 1,500 copies as a Command Paper prior to Second Reading of the EU Bill at an estimated cost of £14,000 for printing and distribution (approximately £9.33 unit cost). The Commentary will also be available for purchase from Her Majesty's Stationery Office for £47.10. This and other Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) publications can be accessed free of charge via the FCO website (www.europe.gov.uk).

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Foreign Office staff worked on the compilation of the Commentary on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, released on 26 January; how many man-hours were allocated to its compilation; how many man-hours were consumed; what consultations concerning this publication were held with bodies outside his Department; and what costs were incurred. [213188]

Mr. Straw: At least 11 Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff were involved at times with drafting the Commentary on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. The FCO does not keep a record of man-hours worked on individual projects. The Commentary represents the considered view of the Government as a whole. I refer the right hon. and learned Gentleman to the reply I gave to him today on costs involved in its publication and distribution (UIN 213187).

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs by what date and in what form he will publish the range of material to accompany the constitutional treaty to which the Prime Minister referred on 4 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1456W; and what the price of such material will be. [212031]

Mr. MacShane: A Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Guide to the EU, which includes basic information about the constitutional treaty as well as general information about how the EU works, was published on 1 November 2004. Members of the public may request a free copy of this guide via the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (www.europe.gov.uk). An FCO Commentary analysing the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe compared with the existing EU treaties was laid in Parliament on 26 January. The commentary can be downloaded from the FCO website free of charge. It will be published as a Command Paper in time for Second Reading of the EU Bill and will be available for reference at central libraries and for purchase from Her Majesty's Stationery Office at £47.10. Further information about the new treaty will be made available by the Government in due course, but decisions about the form and timing of this information have not yet been made.

Georgia

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department provides to Georgia. [211049]

Mr. Alexander: The bulk of the Government's assistance to Georgia comes from the Department for International Development's (DFID) bilateral technical assistance programme. DFID is providing £2 million this financial year. Most of the assistance the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provides comes from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), which is jointly administered by FCO/MOD/DFID.

Examples of GCPP projects in Georgia, which we expect to total in excess of £1 million for this financial year, include:

supporting the conflict resolution work of Sir Brian Fall, the UK Special Representative to the South Caucasus;

building the capacity of the research and information services and other support functions in the Georgian Parliament, and examining the working methods of the committees;

support for the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative, which is a framework for dialogue, contacts and exchange of views between parliamentarians from the three South Caucasus states;

a needs assessment mission to assist the Georgian National Security Council;

building NGO capacity across the regions of Georgia to monitor corruption;

support for confidence-building measures and dialogue between the parties across the conflict divides;

a needs assessment mission looking at police reform.

Outside the GCPP, FCO assistance has been provided for a variety of other projects including recycling and destruction of stockpiles of ammunition and bombs; training for the creation of a public broadcasting service; assistance in providing legal aid in association with the Georgian Parliament's Human Rights Committee; and work with Azerbaijani and Armenian minorities within Georgia.

Iran

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last contacted his Iranian counterpart about the return of the Royal Marine boats and equipment that were seized on 21 June 2004. [211536]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed the status of the boats with Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's Foreign Minister, when they last met on 23 November 2004. He did so with Dr. Hassan Rouhani, the Secretary-General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, on 13 December 2004. The British Ambassador in Tehran and his deputy have discussed the matter with senior officials at the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on several occasions in December 2004 and January 2005.

Israel

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the *(a)* social, *(b)* economic and *(c)* humanitarian impact of the Absentee Property Law in Israel, with particular reference to its impact on the peace process; and if he will make a statement. [211818]

Mr. Alexander: We have made no specific assessment of the social, economic or humanitarian impact of the Absentee Property Law, or its impact on the peace process. However, we are concerned by the potential impact of the Law, and our Ambassador in Tel Aviv has written to the Israeli Justice Minister requesting more information.

We have raised our concerns at the highest levels of the Government of Israel about the destruction of Palestinian homes and agricultural land, the imposition of restrictions on the movement of goods and people (also known as the closures), the destruction of Palestinian infrastructure and the denial of access for humanitarian and medical agencies to those in need. All of these have contributed to Palestinians' sense of frustration and hopelessness, and make a comprehensive settlement more difficult to achieve. A solution to this conflict is crucial both for Israelis and Palestinians, and for broader prospects of long-term peace in the region. That is why progress on the Middle East peace process is one of the highest priority policies for this Government.

Middle East

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress towards the objectives of the Middle East roadmap to peace, with particular reference to his discussions with the *(a)* Israeli Prime Minister and *(b)* Palestinian President. [210945]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary both visited the region in late 2004. In discussions with both sides they found a real recognition that both the Israelis and Palestinians share responsibility for progress on getting back to the roadmap and finding a solution to this conflict. We believe there is an opportunity to build on the current momentum in the Middle East peace process following Mahmoud Abbas' election on 9 January, and with Israel's planned withdrawal from Gaza and part of the northern West Bank later this year.

The prospects for progress towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict are now better than they have been for many years. We must help both sides make the most of this opportunity. The London Meeting on 1 March aims to support the new Palestinian leadership, Palestinian institution building, and contribute to progress on the roadmap.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list overseas trips he and his departmental Ministers have made on official business or using official transport since 1997, broken down by date. [211871]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, since 1999, the Government publish, on an annual basis, the total cost of all ministerial overseas travel and a list of all visits by Cabinet Ministers costing in excess of £500. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are also available in the Library of the House.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the government in Pakistan on its treatment of Christians. [211718]

Mr. Alexander: Although there have been no recent ministerial exchanges on the treatment of Christians in Pakistan, the British Government continues to take a serious view of any persecution of minorities and of other religious intolerance and discrimination in Pakistan. We raise our human rights concerns with the

Pakistani authorities, including on the treatment of Christians, in concert with our EU partners, most recently in December 2004.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the source is of the information on the Foreign Office website on travel advice for those visiting Sri Lanka; and how the information is updated. [211565]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) travel advice draws on a variety of sources including the local knowledge and experience of the FCO's overseas posts and intelligence sources. South Asia Group within the FCO is responsible for collating and assessing this information before it is published on the website. Our travel advice is kept under constant review. It is routinely checked once a month and following any significant incident. At a minimum, it must be revised and re-issued at least once every three months. In a developing crisis, the advice can be updated much more regularly, sometimes several times a day. Substantive amendments, such as a change to the level of advice, are agreed by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209573]

Mr. Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office aims to recruit the most talented candidates from all areas of the UK's diverse population. In addition to the requirement under the Civil Service Commissioner's Code to advertise external vacancies nationwide in national and regional press, we advertise in the ethnic minority press as well as professional and specialist publications.

Our records show that we spent £607,655 in 2002 and £353,587 in 2003 on advertising staff vacancies.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Sudanese authorities regarding the cases of *(a)* Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam of the Sudan Social Development Organisation and *(b)* Mr. Abu-aminaa of the Sudanese Army. [211642]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned about the arrest and detention of Dr. Adam and of Mr. Abu-aminaa. We have raised Dr. Adam's case numerous times with the Sudanese authorities since his arrest in December 2003 and will continue to do so. I have asked our Ambassador in Khartoum to raise the case of Mr. Abu-aminaa with the Sudanese Government.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct the UK representation in Sudan to investigate the case of Shamseldiu Idries-Al-amiu recently deceased. [211643]

Mr. Mullin: Following the death of Shamseldiu Idries-Al-amiu on 10 September 2004, we raised our concerns with the Government of Sudan as part of the EU-Sudan Human Rights dialogue with the Government.

Torture-obtained Information

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department has used information obtained by the use of torture by another country since May 1997. [211604]

Mr. Straw: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 413W.

Travel Costs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203788]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 9 December 2004]:* The costs of Ministerial travel for five Ministers prior to Financial Year 2001–02 and six since are laid out in the table below.

£

Financial year	*Overseas travel*	*UK travel*
1997–98	1,659,098	31,960
1998–99	1,395,663	40,308
1999–2000	1,971,737	34,894
2000–01	1,881,679	33,988
2001–02	1,681,127	37,064
2002–03	1,745,692	39,902
2003–04	1,649,520	24,401

The budget, projected spend, for the 2004–05 Financial Year is £1,514,530 for overseas travel and £23,400 for UK travel.

Details of travel costs for special advisers and officials could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, travel costs for those advisers who accompany their Ministers overseas are included in the annual list of Overseas Travel by Cabinet Ministers.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who signed the Agreements of OJ L 391 volume 47 of 31 December 2004 on behalf of the Zimbabwean Government; where the signing took place; what travel restrictions applied to the individuals involved; and if he will make a statement. [211363]

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Gift Punungwe, the Zimbabwean Ambassador in Brussels, signed the Agreements in OJ L 391 volume 47 of 31 December 2004 on behalf of the Zimbabwean Government. EU sanctions were not lifted to enable this procedure to take place, and did not need to be lifted. Mr. Punungwe is not on the EU's visa ban list. It is normal practice for Ambassadors in Brussels to sign agreements on behalf of their countries.

WALES

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211681]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established July 1999. The total cost for external consultants incurred during 2003–04 was £587. The Wales Office is not currently anticipating that it will incur any costs for external consultants in 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07 or 2007–08.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210322]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999 with a remit to ensure the smooth running of the Welsh devolution settlement. This applies to the whole of Wales and it is not possible to distinguish the effect on a particular constituency. The Wales Office has reported annually on its activities in its departmental reports and, following the machinery of Government changes in 2003, in its annual report (Cm 6228) published in April 2004.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211341]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999 with a remit to ensure the smooth running of the Welsh devolution settlement. This applies to the whole of Wales and it is not possible to distinguish the effect on a particular constituency. The Wales Office has reported annually on its activities in its Departmental Reports and, following the machinery of Government changes in 2003, in its Annual Report (Cm 6228) published in April 2004. :

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213610]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office is not responsible for any official residences.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210553]

Mr. Hain: None.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210547]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1226W.

Welsh Language

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211333]

Mr. Touhig: The Wales Office scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 1 March, and implemented on 28 May, 2004. Prior to that, we had operated within the spirit of the former Welsh Office scheme.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Rates

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 773W, on benefit rates, if he will make it his policy to collect figures for the number of people in hospital for more than a year living on the weekly benefit rate of £15.90 who suffer from mental ill-health. [211954]

Malcolm Wicks: We have no plans to collect information on hospital in-patients by type of illness because it is not relevant to the adjustment of their benefits.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli, Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since it was established. [211318]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001 the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Preseli Pembrokeshire will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 31 per cent. of adults and 7 per cent. of children in Wales are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Preseli Pembrokeshire who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the following table.

Preseli Pembrokeshire parliamentary constituency

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,600
2002	5,700
2003	6,000
2004	6,100

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Preseli Pembrokeshire, the proportion in employment has risen to 71.6 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 1,950 in Preseli Pembrokeshire alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures for 2002–03 show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,400 families in Preseli Pembrokeshire.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. Around 3,905 pensioners in Preseli Pembrokeshire are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £38.36 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally for this year eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the One-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80 plus annual payment are available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 15,600 pensioners in Preseli Pembrokeshire have benefited from this increase.

Lone Parents

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assistance is available to lone parents who wish to return to work in Hendon; how many people have taken up this assistance; and if he will make a statement. [210876]

Jane Kennedy: Work focused interviews provide lone parents with the opportunity to discuss work options and find out about the help available to them through the New Deal for Lone Parents. The New Deal offers lone parents access to support, advice and training which will improve their employment prospects. Other measures to tackle barriers to lone parents entering work include improving the availability of affordable child care and making work pay through the introduction of child tax credit and working tax credit.

1,030 lone parents have started New Deal for Lone Parents in Hendon since the beginning of the programme in October 1998, and 440 have gained a job. Figures for lone parents who have participated in and gained work through other New Deal programmes are not available.

Pension Credit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's take-up targets are for pension credit for *(a)* Scotland and *(b)* the rest of the UK. [212027]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has a Public Service Agreement to have 3 million households in receipt of pension credit in Great Britain by the end of February 2006. As part of last year's Spending Review, we gave a commitment to increase that to £3.2 million households by the end of March 2008. There are no separate targets for Scotland.

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to alter the regulations covering entitlement to pension credit to take account of the aspects of the Civil Partnerships Act 2004 regarding the equal treatment of homosexual couples. [213222]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government hope that the provisions of the Civil Partnership Act can be commenced about a year after the granting of Royal Assent. Consequential changes will be made to the pension credit regulations to the same time scale.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when his Department decided to publish information on pension credit figures on a quarterly basis. [212002]

Malcolm Wicks: Pension credit reporting arrangements were originally designed for a new policy bedding in during its first year. A decision was taken at the beginning of November 2004 that, starting in 2005, information on numbers of pension credit recipients would be reported on a quarterly basis, as stated in the pension credit progress report published on 8 November 2004, a copy of which is in the Library.

Sheffield Forgemasters

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received about the Sheffield's Forgemasters pension scheme. [213392]

Malcolm Wicks: My hon. Friend is aware of the situation of Sheffield Forgemasters and its pension scheme.

On 18 November 2004, I met Graham Honeyman, Managing Director of Sheffield Forgemasters, my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Hillsborough (Helen Jackson) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Central (Mr. Caborn) to discuss their concerns about the pension scheme. Subsequently, officials met Graham Honeyman on 20 January 2005 to discuss general points around current and future pensions legislation.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205593]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. No expenditure was incurred on bought or hired outdoor plants; the amount spent on indoor plants was is set out in the following table:

£

	Indoor bought plants	*Indoor hired plants*
1999–2000	Nil	Nil
2000–01	Nil	1,154
2001–02	Nil	2,769
2002–03	Nil	2,011
2003–04	328	1,685

The costs for indoor hired plants include the supply and maintenance of the plants. The costs for hired plants related to Meridian Court, Glasgow. This contract ended in December 2004.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205613]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office occasionally hires furniture for meetings and events, but details are not held centrally. The amount spent on new furniture in each year since 1 July 1999 was as follows.

	£000
1999–2000	56
2000–01	17
2001–02	5
2002–03	28
2003–04	5

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much the Department spent on first class travel in each year since 1997. [206577]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Details of expenditure on first class travel is not recorded centrally. Information relating to overseas travel by Ministers is published on an annual basis. Information for the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 2004 is available in the Library of the House. Information for the financial year 2004–05 will be published as soon as possible at the end of the current financial year.

All official travel complied with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent on tackling fuel poverty in Scotland in each year since 1997. [211190]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions has spent £766,857,750 on winter fuel payments in Scotland in the years 1999–2000 to 2003–04 and £14,795,457 on cold weather payments in Scotland in the years 1997–98 to 2003–04. Figures are not available for the years 1997–98 and 1998–99 for winter fuel payments. Cold weather payments costs are based on estimated qualifiers. The figures for each of the relevant years are as follows:

£

	Winter fuel payments	*Cold weather payments*
1997–98	Not available	110,415
1998–99	Not available	90,389
1999–2000	138,934,500	185,733.50
2000–01	150,447,500	8,129,672
2001–02	151,897,500	2,831,511.50
2002–03	153,854,000	2,925,071
2003–04	171,724,250	522,665

In addition, the Scottish Executive has responsibility for the central heating programme and the warm deal scheme.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what categories of homes are eligible for assistance under measures to tackle fuel poverty in Scotland. [211191]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scottish Executive is responsible for schemes involving adaptations to homes in Scotland in order to tackle fuel poverty.

Pay Television Subscriptions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207664]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, the Office had one television subscription in 1999 and two television subscriptions each year thereafter. The costs are shown as follows:

	£
1999–2000	[1]37,146
2000–01	10,032
2001–02	10,672
2002–03	10,755
2003–04	10,845

[1] This includes the initial set up costs in Dover House, London, where the subscription provides access to the Parliamentary Video Service.

Smoking

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland in how many rooms within his Department smoking is allowed. [207789]

Mrs McGuire: The Scotland Office has no rooms set aside in which smoking is permitted.

Taskforces

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was spent by his Department in each year since 1997 on taskforces and similar bodies. [204880]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since then, the Office has set up one short-life working group looking at issues related to Gaelic broadcasting; the cost was approximately £1,300.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders were *(a)* applied for and *(b)* obtained in each police authority in each year since their introduction, broken down by recipients aged (i) under 10, (ii) 10 to 20, (iii) 20 to 30, (iv) 30 to 50 and (v) over 50; how many were issued as (A) an attachment to a criminal conviction and (B) in response to non-criminal nuisance or disorder; and how many have been breached in each case. [210732]

Ms Blears: The available information on the number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) applied for and issued, on application or following conviction, is given in tables A to F by Magistrates Courts Committee (MCC) area. These areas are coterminous with police force areas. Data by the requested age groups are not readily available. However, age group data are broken down into juveniles (10–17) and adults (18+). Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are not given to children under the age of 10.

The number of breaches of an ASBO, by MCC area, taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database, are given in table G. These data are currently available for the period 1 June 2000 up to 31 December 2002. Data for 2003 are due to be released shortly. The information contained in tables A to G has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applications for extensions to existing antisocial behaviour orders in Stoke-on-Trent have been *(a)* granted and *(b)* refused in each of the past three years; [210854]

(2) how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the past three years; and how many of them have been breached. [210[illegible]

Ms Blears: For antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) issued, within which restrictions are imposed in the Stoke-on-Trent city council local government area, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), the Home Office has received one notification of an order being varied. The outcome did not affect the duration of the order.

The number of notifications, as reported to the Home Office, of ASBOs issued are given in the table.

The number of antisocial behaviour orders, as notified to the Home Office, wherein restrictions are imposed in the Stoke-on-Trent city council local government area, by period.

Period 1 July to 30 June each year	*Total issued*
2001–02	2
2002–03	6
2003–04	12
Total	20

Information on the number of breaches of an ASBO are taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database. These data, at Criminal Justice System level only, are currently available for the period 1 June 2000 up to 31 December 2002. During this period the total number of ASBOs issued within Staffordshire, as reported to the Home Office, is 22. Of these, six persons breached their ASBO.

ASBO breach data for 2003 are due to be released shortly.

Burglars

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* householders and *(b)* shop-owners who have injured burglars on their property have been charged but not prosecuted by (i) magistrates' courts and (ii) Crown courts in each of the last 10 years; [209832]

(2) in how many cases where *(a)* householders and *(b)* shop-owners have injured a burglar on their property it has taken more than (i) three months and (ii) six months from the start of the investigation for charges to be brought; [209833]

(3) how many *(a)* householders and *(b)* shop-owners who have injured burglars on their property have been investigated but not charged in each of the past 10 years. [209834]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Statistics of persons investigated for or charged with crimes are not collected centrally.

CCTV (Stoke-on-Trent)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been allocated for CCTV schemes in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the past seven years. [211716]

Ms Blears: Since 1997, the Home Office has allocated £549,918 to Stoke-on-Trent to ensure full coverage of the system across the town under the Closed Circuit Television Initiative, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme.

Since the completion of the Crime Reduction Programme in 2002, crime reduction funding has been allocated directly to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership through the Building Safer Communities fund and to Basic Command Unit (BCD) Commanders through the BCD fund. These funding streams finance a variety of interventions, including CCTV, to tackle local crime priorities. Allocation of funding across the area is the responsibility of the local authority and West Midlands police.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 29 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Ms Yulima Vicentre Vidal. [208709]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have now written to my right hon. Friend.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Citizenship, Immigration and Counter-Terrorism will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Basingstoke of 24 September 2004 regarding his former constituent Mr. Kamaljit Kanda. [210669]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to the hon. Member on 31 January.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letters dated 6 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Mrs Saima Manzoor Ahmed and *(b)* Mr. Abdul Rahman Sirwan. [210842]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information is as follows:

(a) I replied to my right hon. Friend on 11 January 2005.

(b) I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 21 January 2005.

Crime (Sentences) Act

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many mandatory minimum sentences have been imposed under the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997 in respect of *(a)* third-time burglars and *(b)* third-time drug dealers. [211739]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The table shows the information reported to the Home Office on persons sentenced under sections 110 and 111 of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000 (previously section 4 of the Crime (Sentences) Act 1997) in England and Wales for a third offence of class A drug trafficking and a third offence of domestic burglary in the years 2000 to 2002.

Statistics for 2003 are due for publication at the end of February and those for 2004 in the autumn.

Persons sentenced under the Powers of the Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000, England and Wales

	Minimum 7 years for third class A drug trafficking offence	*Minimum 3 years for third domestic burglary*
2000	2	—
2001	1	6
2002	—	2

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Department spent on first-class travel in each year since 1997. [206575]

Fiona Mactaggart: The travel and subsistence policy for the core Home Office currently allows civil servants first class travel for official journeys for the following:

(1) Rail—UK and overseas

(2) Air—UK and overseas

(3) Ferry and Eurostar—overseas.

Policy on class of travel allowed for each type of travel is given as follows:

Rail travel

The class of rail travel to which staff are entitled is as follows:

Grade	*Class of travel (including travel by sleeping berth)*
SEO (and equivalent and above)	First class
HEO (and equivalent and below)	Standard class

Sea travel

Staff are entitled to travel first class regardless of grade.

Air travel

The class of air travel is governed by the airlines' fare structure on the various routes, the grade of the member of staff travelling, and the duration of the flight. Entitlements are as follows.

The table details the total travel expenditure for the years requested.

£

	UK airfares	*Overseas airfares*	*UK train*	*Overseas train*	*Overseas ferry fares*	*Total*
1996–97	119,866	110,297	151,930	2,203	0	384,296
1997–98	66,742	168,342	384,618	0	285	619,987
1998–99	107,276	192,583	488,488	8,717	0	797,064
1999–2000	194,399	314,231	776,013	28,041	10	1,312,694
2000–01	304,941	427,627	1,202,930	45,667	0	1,981,165
2001–02	453,745	517,073	1,669,004	12,189	0	2,652,011
2002–03	395,456	381,706	2,172,393	8,394	0	2,957,949
2003–04	987,972	415,106	1,939,607	21,178	0	3,363,863

The increases in travel costs since 2000 can be largely attributed to changes in strategy within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate including increased staff numbers and the need to travel as a result of new policy initiatives and targets for improved IND performance. Other contributing factors have been related to providing advice to the organisers of the 2002 Football World Cup in Japan and Euro 2004 in Portugal and the creation of new units to support the police reform agenda.

Departmental Policy

Jim Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to the South Dorset constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on the South Dorset constituency. [202726]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the South Dorset constituency, as well as for all parts of the UK.

For example, between March 1997 and March 2004, the number of police officers in the Dorset police force increased by 169, from 1,284 to 1,453. The Government's introduction of Community Support Officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 33 CSOs on Dorset streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. Between 1997 and 2003–04, Dorset has seen a reduction in recorded domestic burglary crimes of 27per cent. and in recorded vehicle crimes of 25 per cent.

Dorset police force will receive £66.0 million in general grants in 2005–06, an increase of 3.75 per cent. (£2.4 million). Dorset benefits from the decision to provide a funding floor of 3.75 per cent. If the funding formula had been strictly applied, the force would have received £4.2 million less. General grants funding to Dorset police has increased by 22 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Dorset will also receive around £5 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the Police Authority and the Chief Constable.

As crime prevention requires action across communities, every area has had a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) since 1998 which brings together the police, health services, drugs agencies and council and community representatives to decide how to prevent and deter crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a pioneering government intervention programme which ran for three years from April 1999 in England and Wales and took an evidence-based approach to crime reduction. Grants of over £340 million were allocated to over 1,470 projects, including CCTV, under 20 initiatives that formed part of the programme. Two CCTV projects in the Weymouth and Portland CDRP area received a total of £691,489 from the CRP.

Since 2001, successive initiatives have provided direct funding to each of the 376 Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. These initiatives include Communities Against Drugs, the Safer Communities Initiative, the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas scheme and the Building Safer Communities Fund. Since 2001, a total of £380,488 has been allocated to Weymouth and Portland CDRP and £295,714 to Purbeck CDRP under these initiatives. A further £1.98 million has been provided over the two years 2003–04 and 2004–05 to the Home Office Regional Director in the South West for CDRP capacity building across the region.

The Government's Crime Reduction website provides further information on the work being done to reduce crime across the country, including information about action and results in local areas. It is available at http://www.crimereduction.gov.uk.

New legislation has given local agencies a raft of powers, from anti-social behaviour orders to local dispersal orders and crack house closure powers, to work with local people to tackle antisocial behaviour and nuisance. In Dorset a total of 56 anti-social behaviour orders have been issued as of 27 January 2005, including eight in Purbeck and 12 in Western Dorset (which includes Dorset West and Weymouth and Portland). Local contacts for tackling antisocial behaviour can be found on http://www.together.gov.uk/authority.asp.

Tackling drug misuse is a priority of this Government and their policy is set out in the 10-year National Drug Strategy launched in 1998 and updated in December 2002. (A copy of the Updated Drug Strategy 2002 is held in the House Library.) Under this, the Government have invested substantially in measures to reduce the harms caused by illegal drugs, focusing on the four strands of:

reducing the supply of illegal drugs;

preventing young people from becoming problematic drug users;

providing effective treatment to all who need it; and

reducing drug-related crime.

Direct annual funding nationally to tackle drug misuse amounted to £1,244 million in 2003–04, rising to £1,344 million in 2004–05. Dorset has seen a significant increase in direct funding for tackling drugs, in particular for drug treatment services and the throughcare and aftercare elements of the Drugs Intervention Programme. In 2003–04 the allocation for Dorset Drug Action Team amounted to £1.58 million, rising to £2.09 million in 2004–05. Details of action taken to tackle drugs in the South Dorset constituency can be obtained from the Dorset Drugs Action Team For contact details see http://www.drugs.gov.uk/Links/DrugActionTeams.

The Government are working to ensure that citizens, communities and the voluntary sector are more fully engaged in tackling social problems, and there is more equality of opportunity and respect for people of all races and religions. Active community participation in England has increased by 1.5 million people between 2001 and 2003. Charities have been supported more effectively, and £125 million is being invested across the country through the "futurebuilders" fund in voluntary and community organisations that help provide valuable public services. Advice on ways to engage local people in helping their communities is available on the Active Citizenship Centre website, http://www.active-citizen.org.uk.

This year, 2005, is the year of the volunteer which is being delivered by the Home Office in partnership with Community Service Volunteers and Volunteering England. This will include a whole range of events in local communities across the country that aim to celebrate the contribution which volunteers make to the quality of people's lives, and encourage more people to volunteer. We are particularly keen to encourage young people, black and minority ethnic groups, those with no qualifications and disabled people to get involved. More details can be found at www.yearofthevolunteer.org.

Detailed information on the impact of Home Office policies across the full range of responsibilities is set out in the Home Office Annual Report and in the Strategic Plan for 2004–08, available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk.

Essex/Southend Police

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prosecutions for *(a)* failing to provide a breath test and *(b)* failing to provide a breath specimen for analysis (i) Essex Police and (ii) Southend Police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [211441]

(2) how many prosecutions for *(a)* disobeying a police constable stopping traffic and *(b)* failing to stop for a police constable (i) Essex Police and (ii) Southend Police have brought successfully in each year since 1997; [211442]

(3) how many prosecutions for failing to comply with a road sign *(a)* Essex Police and *(b)* Southend Police have brought successfully in each year since 1997. [211443]

Ms Blears: The available information taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database for Essex Police force area and South East Essex petty sessional area, 1997 to 2002 (latest available) is given in the tables.

2003 data will be available in March 2005.

Table A: Court proceedings for specific motoring offences within (a) Essex Police Force Area[1] and (b) South East Essex Petty Sessional Area (PSA), 1997 to 2002

Number of offences

Offence type	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Essex Police Force Area[1]						
Breath test and specimen offences:						
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88 S. 7 (6)]	226	240	297	203	243	340
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88 S 7 (6)]	9	12	13	—	1	—
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for preliminary test. [RTA88 S6 (4)]	122	128	121	58	50	62
Neglect of traffic directions:						
Failing to comply with traffic light signals [RTA88 S36(1); Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 S2 (10)]	1,175	1,187	923	1,161	1,391	1,406
Driving on prohibited road [RTRA84 SS5(i), 16 and 20]	24	961	926	1,166	806	25
Other offences of neglect of traffic directions [RTA88 SS35 (1) and (2), 36 (1), 163; RTRA84 S28 (3); Traffic Management Act 2004, S6]	201	134	149	134	81	132
South East Essex PSA [2, 3]						
Breath test and specimen offences:						
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88S. 7(6)]	54	49	79	52	62	75
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88S7(6)]	2	4	4	—	—	—
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for preliminary test. [RTA88S6(4)]	30	27	26	10	16	15
Neglect of traffic directions:						
Failing to comply with traffic light signals [RTA88 S36(1); Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 S2 (10)]	560	545	417	576	604	633
Driving on prohibited road [RTRA84 SS5(i), 16 and 20]	—	1	5	10	1	—
Other offences of neglect of traffic directions [RTA88 SS35 (1) and (2), 36 (1), 163; RTRA84 S28 (3); Traffic Management Act 2004, S6]	39	28	30	37	19	23

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[1] Covers both magistrates' courts and the Crown Court.

[2] Covers magistrates' courts only.

[3] Covers Southend and includes parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

Table B: Findings of guilt at all courts for specific motoring offences within Essex Folice Force Area, 1997 to 2002

Number of offences

Offence type	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Breath test and specimen offences:						
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88S. 7(6)]	197	202	249	176	214	282
In charge of a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath it at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88S7(6)]	9	9	11	—	—	1
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for preliminary test. [RTA88 S6 (4)]	59	42	52	41	30	27
Neglect of traffic directions:						
Failing to comply with traffic light signals [RTA88 S36(1); Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 S2 (10)]	1,036	1,063	802	1,021	1,252	1,262
Driving on prohibited road [RTRA84 SS5(i), 16 and 20]	23	938	902	1,094	717	16
Other offences of neglect of traffic directions [RTA88 SS35 (1) and (2), 36 (1), 163; RTRA84 S28 (3); Traffic Management Act 2004, S6]	121	82	103	93	52	84

Table C: Findings of guilt at all courts for specific motoring offences within South East Essex PSA[1, 2] *1997 to 2002*

Number of offences

Offence type	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Breath test and specimen offences:						
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88 S. 7 (6)]	44	37	69	48	58	62
In charge or a motor vehicle and failing to provide a specimen for a laboratory test or two specimens for analysis of breath if at the relevant time driving or attempting to drive a motor vehicle. [RTA88S7(6)]	2	3	4	—	—	—
Failing without reasonable excuse to provide a specimen for preliminary test. [RTA88 S6 (4)]	11	7	9	6	12	4
Neglect of traffic directions:						
Failing to comply with traffic light signals [RTA88 S36(1); Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 S2 (10)]	504	500	389	524	534	565
Driving on prohibited road[RTRA84 SS5(i), 16 and 20]	—	1	4	8	1	—
Other offences of neglect of traffic directions [RTA88 SS35 (1) and (2), 36 (1), 163; RTRA84 S28 (3); Traffic Management Act 2004, S6]	23	17	19	28	13	15

[1] Covers Southend and includes parts of Rayleigh, Benfleet and Canvey.

[2] Includes findings of guilt at South East Essex PSA and at Southend Crown Court.

Fireworks

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firework-related prosecutions occurred in *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* the South Wales Police Force area in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004. [203892]

Ms Blears: The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database on prosecutions for firework offences are shown in the table.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates court for offences relating to fireworks, England and Wales, 2002–03[1]

		South Wales PFA		*Wales*		*England and Wales*	
Offence description	*Principal statute*	*2002*	*2003*	*2002*	*2003*	*2002*	*2003*
Throwing, casting or firing any fireworks in or into any highway, street, etc. public place	Explosives Act 1875 S.80 Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol, etc.) Act 1985, S2A(1)	1	1	5	2	63	48
Being in possession of fireworks etc. in or when entering a designated sports ground		—	—	—	—	5	3
Contravention of regulations —offences under S.12 Consumer Protection Act 1987	Fireworks (Safety) Regulations 1997	18	3	20	6	272	170

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Statistics for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Firework offences can also attract penalty notices. When penalty notices for disorder were introduced in 2003–04, under the provisions of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, they included the offence of throwing fireworks under section 80 of the Explosives Act 1875. Three further firework offences were added to the scheme from 11 October 2004. These were made under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003) and cover breach of the national fireworks curfew, the illegal possession of category 4 fireworks and possession of an adult firework by a person aged under 18.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices for littering have been issued by Coventry community support officers in the last year. [210123]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The information requested is not available. Community support officers in West Midlands police have been designated with the power to issue fixed penalty notices (FPNs) but no central record is kept of the number of FPNs issued.

Identity Cards/Passports

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the assessment of the UK Passport Service biometric trial has been completed. [210007]

Mr. Browne: The United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) Biometrics Enrolment Trial concluded on 24 December 2004 and the findings are currently being evaluated with the final report due for delivery to UKPS in February 2005. This will be followed by a Quality Assurance process prior to release during March 2005.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department where each of the focus groups convened for the consultation on the legislation on identity cards met. [213290]

Mr. Browne: Qualitative research was commissioned during the consultation period on the draft legislation to examine current public perceptions of ID cards. 18 group discussions were conducted with members of the public at 11 locations. Two group discussions took place at each of the following locations: London W1; Erdington, Birmingham; Wimborne, Dorset; Bridgend; East Cramlington, Northumberland; Edinburgh; Belfast and Greenford, Middlesex. One group discussion took place at each of the following locations: Randlay, Telford and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of adults in Scotland who for physical reasons are unable to provide *(a)* fingerprints and *(b)* iris scans for the purposes of the national identity cards scheme. [213291]

Mr. Browne: There is evidence from evaluations of equipment and research studies that for iris and fingerprints, between one per cent. and two per cent. of applicants will be unable to provide a usable fingerprint or iris biometric. The results from the United Kingdom Passport Service biometric pilot, in particular the results from the disabled quota, will provide more detail. For some within this group their biometrics may be readable with special equipment or with the help of manual assistance.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the rate of *(a)* false positive matches and *(b)* false negative matches in the UK Passport Service biometrics trial has been; and what estimates have been made of these rates in a database of all UK adults. [210155]

Mr. Browne: The analysis of false matches/negatives was outside the scope of the United Kingdom Passport Service Biometrics Enrolment Trial which concluded on 24 December 2004.

The rates of false negatives and false positives in the enrolment have not been estimated with any degree of certainty because no final decision on the technology to be used in the scheme has been taken and work on this subject will be undertaken in the future.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of UK adults who for physical reasons are unable to provide *(a)* fingerprints and *(b)* iris scans for the purposes of the national identity cards scheme. [210162]

Mr. Browne: There is evidence from evaluations of equipment and research studies that for iris and fingerprints, between one per cent and two per cent of applicants will be unable to provide a usable fingerprint or iris biometric. For some within this group their biometrics may be readable with special equipment or with the help of manual assistance. The results from the UKPS biometric pilot, in particular the results from the disabled quota, will provide more detail.

Immigration/Asylum

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* scale and *(b)* nature of working by illegal immigrants in the UK. [208887]

Mr. Browne: By definition, the scale of illegal migrant working is difficult to measure because illegal immigrants fall outside of the United Kingdom official statistics. Consequently, there is no official estimate for the number of illegal immigrants working in the United Kingdom. The experience of workplace enforcement officials indicates that illegal migrant working tends to feature in commercial sectors characterised by low skilled, temporary employment in which labour is often supplied via sub-contractual arrangements. The Immigration Service has detected illegal migrant workers employed in various sectors, including hospitality (including hotels and restaurants), car washes and repair garages, the sex trade, horticulture and agriculture, food production, contract cleaning, manufacturing and the care home sector. The Government take seriously the harm caused by illegal working, including the risk to our immigration control and the exploitative treatment often experienced by workers. We have strengthened the law preventing illegal working and are examining how best to improve compliance and enforcement.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many applicants for asylum who have been granted temporary leave to remain in the UK who have served, or are serving, custodial sentences for crimes committed in the UK in each of the last five years for which there are records, have been *(a)* returned to their country of origin and *(b)* had their status revoked; and if he will make a statement; [208945]

(2) how many applicants for asylum who have been granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK who have served, or are serving, custodial sentences for crimes committed in the UK in each of the last five years for which there are records, have been *(a)* returned to their country of origin and *(b)* had their status revoked; and if he will make a statement. [208946]

Mr. Browne: The Prison Service does not record information on deportation orders on the Inmate Information System. Information on the number of persons held in prison who are the subject of a deportation order is not therefore available except by examination of individual case files, at disproportionate cost.

The number of asylum seekers removed from the United Kingdom as a result of deportation action is given in the following table. There is no information on whether these cases would have been deported immediately after completing a prison sentence, without examining individual files at disproportionate cost.

Persons removed from the United Kingdom as a result of deportation action, 1999 to 2003

	1999[1]	2000[1]	2001[2]	2002[2]	2003[3]
Persons removed[4]	1,210	1,280	450	415	—
Of whom:					
Principal asylum applicants[5]	140	145	85	100	—
Non-asylum cases	1,075	1,140	365	315	—

[1] Deportation figures may be under-recorded in 1999 and 2000.

[2] Figures for 2001 and 2002 have been estimated.

[3] Data were not of sufficient quality for publication in 2003, however it is estimated that 480 persons were removed as a result of deportation action in this year. Due to poor data quality this is not an official statistic.

[4] Figures rounded to the nearest 5.

[5] Persons who had sought asylum at some stage. Excludes dependents of asylum seekers.

Deportations are a specific subset of removals alongside persons subject to administrative removal, removal due to illegal entry action or those refused entry at port and subsequently removed. Information on the number of asylum seekers who have been deported in 2004 is not currently available. This is due to be published this summer in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom 2004".

Information on the number of asylum applicants who had been granted leave to remain in the UK and then had their status revoked is not available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down the numbers of people who migrated to the UK in each of the last three years by *(a)* age, *(b)* gender and *(c)* ethnicity. [211257]

Mr. Browne: The latest published statistics on the number of people granted indefinite leave to remain (settlement) in the UK by age and gender are given in the table.

This information is published annually in the Command Paper "Control of Immigration: Statistics United Kingdom" available from the Library of the House or via the Home Office website at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Data on the ethnic origin of persons granted settlement are not collated and are therefore not available.

Table 5.2: Grants of settlement on removal of time limit, by broad nationality, gender and age[1], excluding EEA nationals, 2003[2]: United Kingdom

Number of persons

Geographical region	*Children (under 16)*	*16–24*	*25–34*	*35–44*	*45–59*	*60+*	*Adults (16 and over)*
All nationalities							
Male	13,270	8,000	20,915	12,245	5,240	1,790	48,195
Female	12,630	14,760	26,550	12,695	5,620	3,105	62,730
Total	25,900	22,765	47,470	24,940	10,860	4,895	110,925
Europe (excluding EEA)							
Male	1,230	925	2,195	1,070	410	75	4,680
Female	1,165	1,835	4,075	1,370	595	180	8,055
Total	2,395	2,765	6,265	2,440	1,010	260	12,735
Americas							
Male	1,630	680	2,150	1,645	805	215	5,490
Female	1,655	1,080	3,260	2,085	1,005	295	7,725
Total	3,280	1,760	5,410	3,730	1,810	510	13,215
Africa							
Male	5,635	2,475	5,825	4,800	2,050	540	15,690
Female	5,330	3,140	6,570	4,350	1,990	915	16,965
Total	10,965	5,615	12,400	9,150	4,040	1,455	32,655

Table 5.2: Grants of settlement on removal of time limit, by broad nationality, gender and age[1], excluding EEA nationals, 2003[2]: United Kingdom

Number of persons

Geographical region	*Children (under 16)*	*16–24*	*25–34*	*35–44*	*45–59*	*60+*	*Adults (16 and over)*
Asia							
Indian sub-continent							
Male	2,035	2,670	5,510	2,050	860	565	11,660
Female	1,885	6,515	4,205	1,290	695	1,035	13,740
Total	3,920	9,185	9,710	3,340	1,560	1,600	25,400
Middle East							
Male	525	320	665	510	235	115	1,845
Female	480	445	660	420	190	215	1,930
Total	1,005	765	1,325	930	425	330	3,775
Remainder of Asia							
Male	1,795	735	2,295	1,510	605	220	5,370
Female	1,750	1,430	5,190	2,585	870	390	10,470
Total	3,550	2,165	7,485	4,095	1,475	610	15,840
Asia							
Male	4,355	3,725	8,470	4,070	1,705	905	18,875
Female	4,110	8,395	10,055	4,295	1,755	1,640	26,135
Total	8,470	12,120	18,520	8,365	3,460	2,545	45,010
Oceania							
Male	305	90	2,135	600	240	35	3,100
Female	285	200	2,430	505	215	35	3,380
Total	590	290	4,560	1,105	455	70	6,480
British Overseas citizens and other countries							
Male	115	105	145	55	30	20	360
Female	85	110	165	95	55	40	470
Total	200	220	310	150	90	60	830

[1] Excludes 2,865 persons given settlement on arrival, for which an age analysis is not available, and a further 1,795 persons whose ages are not available.

[2] Provisional.

Note:

Data rounded to the nearest 5.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of central Government grants to each local authority to support asylum seekers was in each year since 1996–97. [207955]

Mr. Browne: The information is not available in the precise format requested. Information for the 1996–97, 1997–98 and 1998–99 is not available. Available information for the years 1999–2000 to 2004–05 is in the following table.

Local authority grant rates—per week of support

£

		Category/year (rates shown represent maximum grant available)			
		1999–2000[1, 5]	*1999–2000[2, 3, 5]*	*2000–01*	*2001–02[4]*
Adults	London boroughs[8]	140.00	140.00	140.00	140.00
	Non-London boroughs	140.00	140.00	140.00	140.00
Families	London boroughs[8]	240.00	240.00	350.00	350.00
	Non-London boroughs	240.00	240.00	240.00	240.00
Large families	London boroughs[8]	240.00	240.00	350.00	380.00
	Non-London boroughs	240.00	240.00	240.00	270.00
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (U16)	Up to 100 claimants	n/a	n/a	400.00	400.00
	More than 100 claimants	n/a	n/a	575.00	575.00
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (016)	Up to 100 claimants	n/a	n/a	200.00	200.00
	More than 100 claimants	n/a	n/a	300.00	300.00

£

		Category/year (rates shown represent maximum grant available)			
		2002–03[4, 7]	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Adults	London boroughs[8]	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
	Non-London boroughs	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
Families	London boroughs[8]	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
	Non-London boroughs	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
Large families	London boroughs[8]	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
	Non-London boroughs	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (U16)	Up to 100 claimants	420.00	[7]—	670.00	686.75
	More than 100 claimants	575.00	[7]—	670.00	686.75
Unaccompanied asylum seeking children (016)	Up to 100 claimants	220.00	[7]—	300.00	307.50
	More than 100 claimants	300.00	[7]—	300.00	307.50

[1] Prior to Royal Assent of the Asylum Support (Interim Provisions) Regulations 1999—up to 5 December 1999.

[2] Post Royal Assent of the Asylum Support (Interim Provisions) Regulations 1999—6 December 1999 onwards.

[3] Post Royal Assent, overspends in the adults or families category were allowed to be offset in the other, hence actual rates paid may be higher in one or other of these categories from this point on.

[4] For the period 1 April 2001 to 7 November 2002 UASC aged 16 and 17 who had applied for asylum prior to their 16th birthday and were still being cared for under Sect 20 or Sect 23 of the Children Act 1989 could be claimed.

[5] In 1999–2000 grants for UASC were paid by DoH and not MASS.

[6] From 2002–03 onwards individual rates were set for each local authority for adults and families, based upon actual spend in 2001–02 and increased for inflation.

[7] Rates shown for UASC in 2002–03 were paid for the period up to Royal Assent of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act on 7 November 2002, subsequent to this individual rates were set for each authority based unit costs in 2001–02 adjusted for inflation.

[8] Rates for London boroughs were also paid to several adjacent local authorities with similar costs.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have been removed from the UK less than three months after all appeals have been exhausted in the last year for which figures are available. [211600]

Mr. Browne: Information is not currently available for all case types.

Management information indicates that between January 2004 and December 2004 1,500 failed asylum seekers were removed within three months of having exhausted all appeals.

This information has not been quality assured and should be treated as provisional management information only.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people resident in Stoke-on-Trent who are applying for asylum are *(a)* male, *(b)* female, *(c)* married and *(d)* single; and how many have children. [211710]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives.

The table shows the numbers of people supported by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) resident in Stoke-on-Trent as at the end of September 2004. These data are analysed by gender and whether the person is a single applicant, an applicant with dependants or a dependant of an applicant. Details of age, marital status and number of children are not available.

Table showing asylum seekers supported in (A): NASS accommodation[1, 2, 3] and (B): in receipt of subsistence only support from NASS[1, 3, 4] Stoke-on-Trent as at end Q3 2004

	Male	*Female*	*Total*
NASS accommodation			
Single applicants	100	395	495
Applicants with dependants	55	25	80
Dependants[5]	85	65	150
Total	240	485	725
NASS subsistence only			
Single applicants	5	25	30
Applicants with dependants	*	—	—
Dependants[5]	*	—	—
Total	5	25	30

[1] Figures have been rounded to nearest 5 and are provisional, with * = 1 or 2.

[2] Asylum seekers that have been allocated NASS accommodation and have been confirmed as having arrived in that accommodation.

[3] Excludes cases where support has been ceased by the National Asylum Support Service.

[4] Asylum seekers receiving subsistence only support from the National Asylum Support Service.

[5] A dependant is defined as any person who accompanies the support applicant in the UK and will need to be supported.

Analyses of these totals are based on internal management information and as such are not of sufficient quality to be published as National Statistics.

Corresponding figures for those not in receipt of NASS support are not available. In addition some applicants may leave the United Kingdom without informing the Immigration Service.

Numbers of asylum seekers placed in MASS accommodation and numbers who are in receipt of subsistence only support from MASS, are published on a quarterly and annual basis. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 (October to December) will be available on 22 February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum registration cards have been issued in each of the last six months; and how many in each month prohibited employment. [212102]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The information requested is set out in the table:

2004	*Employment prohibited ARCs produced*	*Total ARCs produced*
July	4,840	5,300
August	4,680	5,170
September	5,000	5,550
October	4,700	5,200
November	4,490	4,990
December	4,180	4,480
Total for period	27,890	30,690

Note:

Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

These figures have been obtained from the Asylum Registration Cards Database and are subject to change. They include cards issued to new asylum seekers and their dependants as well as replacements where, for instance, the original has been lost or damaged.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many holders of asylum registration cards with employment prohibited have left the UK *(a)* voluntarily and *(b)* through deportation in each of the last six months. [212103]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* I regret that the information requested is not available.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people to whom asylum registration cards have been issued are resident in the UK. [212105]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* Application Registration Cards (ARCs) are only issued to asylum seekers who are present in the UK. Details are not recorded of the numbers of ARC holders who have since left the UK.

IND Case

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when officials at the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will resolve the immigration status of a constituent of the hon. Member for Vauxhall, reference number: L0102000/1. [203535]

Mr. Browne: I regret that from the information given it has not been possible for Immigration and Nationality Directorate officials to identify the case referred to. If my hon. Friend writes to me with full details I will ensure a full response is provided.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205790]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office does not hold central records detailing every IT project, amount spent, cost of over-run and time of over-run, since 1997. An exercise to obtain the aforementioned information will incur disproportionate costs.

However, the Department is currently implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning system which will allow easier access to this type of information in the future.

Juvenile Offenders

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a national programme for dealing with juvenile offenders in custody who have been *(a)* subjected to and *(b)* convicted of sexual offences. [210500]

Paul Goggins: The Youth Justice Board, together with the Prison Service, are developing proposals to establish a treatment service for young people convicted of sexual offences. It is expected that the service will involve a screening and assessment process followed by intensive interventions, and will be provided at selected sites within the juvenile estate.

The Board and the Prison Service are also considering, in the context of a recent major review of safeguarding arrangements in the Prison Service juvenile estate, how the needs of young people who have been the victim of a sexual offence may best be met.

Juvenile Travel (Parental Consent)

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether a 16 to 18-year-old domiciled in the UK requires written or verbal permission from a parent or guardian to leave the UK *(a)* under any circumstances, *(b)* when purchasing a one-way ticket abroad, *(c)* when travelling to EU destinations and *(d)* when travelling to non-EU destinations; [207885]

(2) if he will take steps to harmonise guidance protocols across the European Union regarding children aged 16 to 18-years-old attempting to leave the UK without the consent of their parents or legal guardians; [207888]

(3) what authority parents or legal guardians of children aged 16 to 18 years of age have to prevent or delay them from leaving the UK; [207889]

(4) how many children aged *(a)* 15 or under and *(b)* 16 to 18 years of age (i) attempted to leave the country without the consent of their parents or legal guardians and (ii) were detained in the course of attempting to leave the country without the consent of their parents or legal guardians in each of the last 10 years; [207890]

(5) how many children who have been reported missing in each of the last 10 years are believed to have left the UK; [207891]

(6) what training and written guidance is given to *(a)* staff at ports and airports, *(b)* police at ports and airports and *(c)* police, regarding children aged 16 to 18 years of age who attempt to leave the UK without the knowledge or consent of their parents or legal guardians; [207892]

(7) what guidance his Department provides to parents and legal guardians of children aged 16 to 18 years of age who attempt to leave the UK without their knowledge or consent. [207893]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate no longer routinely operates an embarkation control and immigration officers have no powers to prevent a person from leaving the United Kingdom, and therefore the information requested is not collected.

Managed Migration Directorate

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many caseworkers of the Managed Migration Directorate were at work on *(a)* 6 and *(b)* 7 March.. [207536]

Mr. Browne: The number of caseworkers within Managed Migration Directorate who were at work:

(a) on Saturday, 6 March 2004 was 158; and

(b) on Sunday, 7 March 2004 was 18.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the operating budget of the Managed Migration Unit of the Home Office is for 2004–05. [213283]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The operating cost budget of the Managed Migration Directorate within the Home Office for 2004–05 is £61 million.

Mr. Richard Watson

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the results were of the investigations into how the written parliamentary questions tabled on 11 October by the hon. Member for Thurrock relating to the murder of Richard Watson were lost; and if he will make a statement; [204164]

(2) if he will publish in the *Official Report*, the letter of 2 December from the Minister of State for Crime Reduction to the hon. Member for Thurrock, concerning Mr. Richard Watson. [206327]

Ms Blears *[holding answers 13 and 20 December 2004]:* Ministers make every effort to answer questions substantively in accordance with performance guidelines and especially before Prorogation. However this is not always possible and sometimes, as in the case of the nine questions tabled by the hon. Member for Thurrock referred to in the above question (204164), complex information has to be obtained from both within and outside the Department before it can be answered substantively. In the case in question it was not possible to provide substantive answers to the questions before Prorogation.

For this reason I wrote to the hon. Member for Thurrock on 2 December 2004 providing him with the information he had requested and arranged for a copy of the letter to be placed in the House Library. The *Official Report* cannot publish the written correspondence between myself and the hon. Member, however, the main text of the letter is as follows:

"On the issues you raised concerning the murder of Richard Watson the Chief Constable of Sussex Police advise me as follows:

(a) The purpose of the meeting of 24 January 2003 with Mrs. Henderson was to ensure that she and her daughter were updated with the progress of the re-investigation. Following that meeting, in March 2003, a suspect was arrested and interviewed, which subsequently led to papers being passed to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for advice in May 2003.

(b) The re-investigation, which was headed first by DCI Wood and then, from April 2002, by DCI Dennis has now been completed. On the 26 May 2003, a file of evidence was forwarded to the CPS concerning one specific suspect, who found that there was no basis for a prosecution in relation to the case papers provided to them. The case is not, however, closed and any new lines of inquiry that emerge will be fully investigated.

(c) The Chief Constable did not record the complaint of Mrs. Henderson for two reasons. Firstly, Mrs. Henderson's complaint referred to complaints about the original investigation, which had already been dealt with. Secondly, the remaining points raised about the re-investigation did not amount to complaints about the conduct of individual police officers, but related to operational matters all of which were subsequently addressed by the restructuring of the force approach to critical incidents. The Secretary of State has no powers to review a Chief Constable's decision not to record a complaint under Section 69(1) of the Police Act 1996.

(d) A full and unqualified apology was provided to Mrs. Henderson in a letter dated 31 October 2003. Press releases were available from 9 December 2002 to 8 October 2004. All of these press releases contained repeated apologies, personally made, to Mrs. Henderson and her family.

Following the Inquest, on the 8 October 2004, a public apology was posted on the Sussex Police public website acknowledging its failings in the case and accepting that there were serious failings in the original investigation. The apology also included an acknowledgement that Mrs. Linda Watson and her daughter, Ms Amanda London-Williams, were innocent of all charges in relation to Richard Watson's murder.

This latest statement is available to anyone visiting the site and has been supplied to the *Daily Express* and *Sunday Express* following specific requests.

(e) The report of the Police Complaints Authority's supervised investigation by the Metropolitan Police into Sussex Police's investigation of the murder of Richard Watson belongs to Sussex Police. It has not been published and is protected by public interest immunity and will continue to remain so unless directed otherwise by the Courts. The Secretary of State is therefore not in a position to place a copy in the Library.

(f) The original investigating officer overseeing the inquiry retired from Sussex Police on 30 May 1998 on completion of over 30 years' service. He would have faced disciplinary charges for his conduct of the investigation had he not already retired

from the Police Service. There is no mechanism whereby retired officers can face disciplinary proceedings.

(g) The Chief Constable formally referred a file of papers relating to the murder of Richard Watson to the Crown Prosecution Service on 26 May 2003.

(h) Sussex Police received the Metropolitan Police's report into the investigation on 28 April 2000."

Peter Sutcliffe

Mr. Collins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in what circumstances he would permit a return visit by Peter Sutcliffe to Arnside in Cumbria. [211309]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* Any application would be considered on its individual merits. There is currently no application for any leave.

Police

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* crime and incident and *(b)* custody unit staff employed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have been dismissed in each year since 1997; [210457]

(2) how many *(a)* forensic and scientific staff and *(b)* analysis and intelligence staff employed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police have been dismissed in each year since 1997; [210458]

(3) how many *(a)* police drivers and *(b)* finance staff have been dismissed by (i) Essex police and (ii) Southend police in each year since 1997; [210459]

(4) how many traffic wardens employed on behalf of *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police have been dismissed in each year since 1997; [210460]

(5) how many IT communications and audio staff have been dismissed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; [210461]

(6) how many control room staff have been dismissed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; [210462]

(7) how many administrative and clerical staff were dismissed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997; [210463]

(8) how many personnel and human resources staff have been employed by *(a)* Essex police and *(b)* Southend police in each year since 1997. [210464]

Ms Blears: The information requested is in the following table.

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Essex								
Forensic and Scientific Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Analysis and Intelligence Staff	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Police Drivers	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Wardens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
IT Communications and Audio Staff	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Control Room Staff	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crime and Incident Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Custody Unit Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Southend								
Forensic and Scientific Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Analysis and Intelligence Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Police Drivers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Traffic Wardens	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IT Communications and Audio Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Control Room Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crime and Incident Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Custody Unit Staff	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in the numbers of full-time police officers in *(a)* Lancashire Constabulary and *(b)* Burnley has been since 1997. [204341]

Ms Blears: Police numbers for the Lancashire Constabulary increased by 9.8 per cent. (+ 320) to 3,567 between March 2002 and data for March 2003 onwards can be found on the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate pages of the Home Office website. The Burnley parliamentary constituency is part of the Pennine (F) Division.

On 31 March 2004 the Pennine Division had 574 officers, an increase of 9.1 per cent. (+ 48) since March 2002. For the period March 2002 to March 2004 Lancashire Constabulary strength increased by 7.4 per cent. (+ 246). The deployment of officers within the Pennine (F) Division is a matter for the Divisional Commander.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* part-time, including reduced hour and short-time working and *(b)* full-time police officers there were in each constabulary in each of the past seven years. [211295]

Ms Blears: The available information is given in the following table. Prior to 1 April 2002 a headcount of police officers was not collected centrally. Therefore the numbers of full-time police officers can only be calculated for the past two years.

Part-time police officers	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	39	57	72	73	93	101	123
Bedfordshire	17	20	24	31	31	36	44
Cambridgeshire	24	26	0	24	25	35	41
Cheshire	29	38	41	38	42	49	54
Cleveland	37	40	40	45	50	54	49
Cumbria	17	21	29	38	53	56	64
Derbyshire	17	24	36	41	50	54	64
Devon and Cornwall	59	69	80	80	106	124	155
Dorset	23	31	38	41	51	61	66
Durham	16	23	0	24	27	34	44
Dyfed-Powys	9	15	19	18	27	31	38
Essex	66	68	68	91	93	111	129
Gloucestershire	18	30	35	43	46	58	65
Greater Manchester	69	78	86	115	137	165	176
Gwent	17	22	34	38	41	43	42
Hampshire	34	42	60	71	81	99	121
Hertfordshire	39	44	44	55	57	77	86
Humberside	44	44	41	48	54	62	70
Kent	54	73	87	93	14	119	144
Lancashire	39	59	75	81	90	100	104
Leicestershire	32	36	38	40	47	50	59
Lincolnshire	9	11	2	19	18	23	24
London, City of	15	15	17	19	21	21	16
Merseyside	34	28	56	73	85	104	110
Metropolitan police	489	496	578	649	757	882	933
Norfolk	28	34	44	52	60	65	65
Northamptonshire	28	25	30	37	38	52	54
Northumbria	48	59	60	77	95	97	109
North Wales	13	0	17	21	24	25	50
North Yorkshire	19	22	25	27	37	39	51
Nottinghamshire	52	59	65	69	73	76	93
South Wales	22	26	30	39	47	52	58
South Yorkshire	38	43	51	62	63	73	84
Staffordshire	31	46	60	68	85	103	114
Suffolk	16	18	24	34	48	57	58
Surrey	41	45	47	63	56	65	69
Sussex	66	79	70	101	120	151	166
Thames Valley	81	92	98	92	103	118	122
Warwickshire	16	17	20	26	23	25	29
West Mercia	24	29	35	56	63	56	57
West Midlands	135	153	195	200	193	288	331
West Yorkshire	85	94	113	131	151	172	179
Wiltshire	15	24	27	34	49	58	64
Total	2,004	2,275	2,611	3,077	3,424	4,121	4,574

Full-time police officers	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Avon and Somerset	3,097	3,338
Bedfordshire	1,096	1,171
Cambridgeshire	1,368	1,385
Cheshire	2,103	2,166
Cleveland	1,552	1,662
Cumbria	1,118	1,200
Derbyshire	1,973	2,038
Devon and Cornwall	3,137	3,211
Dorset	1,383	1,411
Durham	1,640	1,670
Dyfed-Powys	1,129	1,149
Essex	2,934	3,036
Gloucestershire	1,200	1,256
Greater Manchester	7,266	7,980
Gwent	1,324	1,347
Hampshire	3,646	3,704
Hertfordshire	1,924	2,059
Humberside	2,084	2,186
Kent	3,412	3,530
Lancashire	3,310	3,513
Leicestershire	2,114	2,261
Lincolnshire	1,220	1,223
London, City of	797	845
Merseyside	4,037	4,053
Metropolitan police	27,687	29,452
Norfolk	1,469	1,485
Northamptonshire	1,185	1,228
Northumbria	3,949	3,984
North Wales	1,543	1,593
North Yorkshire	1,425	1,497
Nottinghamshire	2,426	2,444
South Wales	3,236	3,275
South Yorkshire	3,143	3,250
Staffordshire	2,153	2,207
Suffolk	1,217	1,273
Surrey	1,893	1,898
Sussex	2,935	2,979
Thames Valley	3,824	4,027
Warwickshire	984	992
West Mercia	2,286	2,328
West Midlands	7,646	7,794
West Yorkshire	4,921	5,191
Wiltshire	1,128	1,189
Total	129,914	135,480

Police Command Units

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police Basic Command Units (BCUs) there were in each of the last seven years; and how many BCUs he estimates there will be in *(a)* 2004–05, *(b)* 2005–06 and *(c)* 2006–07. [201389]

Ms Blears: Force areas are divided into Basic Command Units (BCUs). These are typically commanded by police officers of superintendent or chief superintendent rank with responsibility for the delivery of policing, the management of officers and other police staff and a number of police stations in their area. The determination of areas of command and the deployment of resources within a force are matters for the Chief Constable rather than for Ministers.

There are currently 255 BCUs in England and Wales. Based on information currently available from forces, the number of BCUs is expected to fall to around 245 in 2005–06. No estimates for BCU numbers after 2005–06 can be made at this stage.

BCU numbers were/are as follows.

	Number
1995–96	408
1996–97	382
1997–98	389
1998–99	369
1999–2000	319
2000–01	318
2001–02	280
2002–03	278
2003–04	272
2004–05	255

The number of BCUs has been reduced as police forces have rationalised boundaries to follow those of CDRPs more closely. This has facilitated closer co-operation between the police and their partners.

Policing (Dagenham)

Jon Cruddas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average spending per capita on policing in the Dagenham constituency has been in each year since 1996–97. [207157]

Ms Blears: The Commissioner of Police the Metropolis informs me that the spending per capita in the Barking and Dagenham Borough Operational Command unit (BOCU) is as follows:

Spending per capita[5] in Barking and Dagenham BOCU

	£
1999–2000[1]	72
2000–01	65
2001–02	67
2002–03[2]	93
2003–04[3]	115
2004–05[4]	128

[1] No earlier information is available due to change of force's financial system.

[2] Includes partnership funding for the first time.

[3] Includes partnership funding, building maintenance and interpreters costs. Included for the first time is the devolved responsibility for Forensic Medical Examiners costs; and the introduction of the Community Support Officers.

[4] Includes partnership funding. Included for the first time is the devolved responsibility for forensics costs; and phase 1 of the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative.

[5] 2001 Census population estimate of the London borough of Barking and Dagenham.

This reflects direct operational costs. In addition, BOCUs are able to call upon all-London units (such as dog sections, Territorial Support Group, Traffic and Air Support Units) when operational priorities dictate.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners have been transferred to Standford Hill Open Prison from *(a)* Elmley Prison and *(b)* Swaleside Prison in each year since 1997; [209864]

(2) how many prisoners have been transferred to Standford Hill Open Prison from *(a)* Elmley Prison and *(b)* Swaleside Prison in each year between 1997 and 2004. [210955]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* Figures for the number of prisoners transferred to Standford Hill prison are available only from November 1999 onwards for Elmley prison and from 2003 for Swaleside prison. These are shown in the following table.

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005 (to date)*
Elmley	64	136	126	82	142	5
Swaleside	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	28	9	0
Total	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	110	151	5

[1] Figures not recorded

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many inmates there are at HMP Holloway; what the average period of stay was of an inmate at that prison at the last date for which figures are available; and what the average number of remand prisoners in the institution was in the last period for which figures are available. [210706]

Paul Goggins: The population of HMP Holloway was 377 on 30 November 2004, of which 185 were remand prisoners. The average remand population at the prison for the year December 2003 to November 2004 was 273. The average time served (including remand time) in HMP Holloway for a sample of sentenced prisoners discharged in 2003 was 47 days per episode.

The information is as recorded on the Prison Service IT system, and data on average time served are provisional.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners at *(a)* Elmley prison and *(b)* Swaleside prison have been reclassified from Category C to Category D in each year since 1997. [210954]

Paul Goggins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, PQ 209863.

Probation Service

Mrs. Helen Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how he will ensure that future organisational change in the probation service does not have a negative impact on *(a)* staff morale and *(b)* industrial relations. [205317]

Paul Goggins: We recognise the importance of positive engagement by staff, and the unions that represent them, in the development of National Offender Management Service (NOMS).

We have established a Joint Consultative Council (JCC) to provide a forum for communication, discussion, consultation and early information sharing between NOMS, all recognised trade unions and the Probation Boards Association (PBA). The JCC met on 12 November and 17 December.

We will also continue to invest in the probation service and, in particular to expand the workforce. In 1997 the service employed 13,968 staff. This had risen to 19,119 by 2004 and we plan to have around 21,000 in employment by April 2006.

The JCC is additional to existing methods of communication, consultation and negotiation in the National Probation Service (NPS).

The principal industrial relations forum for the NPS is the National Negotiating Council (NCC) which is comprised of the recognised trades unions in the NPS, the PBA and the National Probation Directorate. In addition there are forums representing senior managers and chief officers. The NNC will be critical to the successful implementation of any changes and the Home Office and NPD are committed which is designed to preserve and enhance staff morale in the service and promote a positive climate of industrial relations.

The NOMS Change Programme includes a Human Resources Sub-Programme, specifically intended to deliver policies, strategies and frameworks which will provide members of staff with the culture, values, skills and motivation required for the new organisation and new ways of working.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the performance against targets of the national probation service during the period of April to September 2004 was; and what assessment he has made of the implications of that performance for the *(a)* quality of service and *(b)* cost effectiveness provided by the service. [210787]

Paul Goggins: The performance of the national probation service (NPS) in meeting its targets for April to September 2004 is set out in the table alongside its performance for 2003–04.

	2003–04		*April to September 2004–05*		*Percentage point change*
Performance measure	*Target*	*Achieved*	*Target*	*Achieved*	
Enforcement within 10 days					
Percentage	90	77	90	85	+8
Compliance					
Percentage	70	63	70	65	+2
Compliance including orders allowed to continue					
Percentage	—	—	70	79	—
Offending Behaviour Programme Completions					
Number	15,000	13,136	7,500	6,827	
Percentage	—	88	—	91	+3
ECP completions					
Number	—	—	11,850	17,518	—
Percentage	—	—	—	148	—
DTTO starts					
Number	9,000	8,519	6,078	4,847	
Percentage	—	95	—	180	[1] −15
Basic Skills Starts					
Number	16,000	14,971	11,520	13,353	—
Percentage	—	94	—	116	+22
Basic Skills Awards					
Number	4,000	2,815	2,960	3,302	
Percentage	—	70	—	112	+42
Sickness					
Number days	9	12.3	9	11.5	−0.8
Victims contacted					
Percentage	85	91	85	[2] 93	+2
Timeliness of Pre-Sentence Reports					
Percentage	90	65	90	78	+7

[1] Although DTTO starts were down, this was against a higher target. There were in fact 864 more DTTO starts in April-September 2004 than in the equivalent period in 2003.

[2] April to June 2004.

The comparison illustrates the real improvement that the NPS has achieved on most of its main service delivery targets, including those, such as basic skills, that were increased for 2004–05.

The budget for probation areas has increased by two per cent. in real terms in 2004–05. Much of this increase relates to funding capacity-building for the Criminal Justice Act 2003 and so is not directly related to the increase in performance. It is fair to say, therefore, that the improved performance has increased the cost-effectiveness of the NPS, so improving the value for money of the service delivered to the community.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211561]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office spend on advertising and publicity since 1996–97 is as follows:

1996–97

£5.23 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £8.328 million. Campaigns included car crime, recruitment of special constables, fire safety and electoral registration.

1997–98

£1.4 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £3.372 million. Campaigns included recruitment of special constables, fire safety, absent voting and electoral registration.

1998–99

£1.8 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £4.194 million. Campaigns included smoke alarms, recruitment of special constables, crime partnerships and electoral registration.

1999–2000

£5.65 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £10.08 million. Campaigns included chip pan safety, recruitment of special constables, European parliamentary elections and electoral registration.

2000–01

£28.63 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £35.637 million. Campaigns included fire safety, vehicle crime and the recruitment of police officers.

2001–02

£14.4 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £25.1 million. Campaigns included fire safety, vehicle crime, internet child protection, drug misuse, recruitment of police officers and special constables and postal voting.

2002–03

£9.9 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £18.3 million. Campaigns included vehicle crime, internet child protection, drugs, firearms amnesty and the recruitment of police officers.

2003–04

£12.487 million on advertising in a total advertising and publicity budget of £22.083 million. Campaigns included vehicle crime, internet child protection, drugs, recruitment of police officers and domestic violence.

Figures for 2004–05 will be available shortly after the end of the financial year. We do not have estimated advertising and publicity costs for future years—this will be subject to ministerial approval on an annual basis.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much and what percentage of the expenditure of each agency sponsored by his Department went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [207000]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office currently sponsors the following agencies:

Criminal Records Bureau

Probation Service

Prison Service

United Kingdom Passport Service.

The Home Office also provides grant funding for a further 15 external organisations which hold the status of non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs). These organisations have been included in the response to the question raised as they are organisations that are sponsored by the Home Office.

The Home Office agencies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) use their own accounting system and they have provided the information relating to research and development costs for their own organisation.

The information relating to the amount and percentage of research and development costs for agencies sponsored by the Home Office is shown in the table.

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*	
Department	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*
Criminal Records Bureau	0	0	0	0	0	0
Probation Service	0	0	0	0	0	0
Prison Service	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom Passport Service	0	0	2,840,000	2.4	4,248,000	3
Central Police Development and Training Authority (Centrex)	n/a	n/a	2,526,000	3.4	5,106,000	5.5
Commission for Racial Equality	265,625	2.2	317,235	2.5	50,864	0.6
Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0
Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeal Panel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Community Development Foundation	40,587	0.2	47,822	0.3	51,285	1
Criminal Cases Review Commission	0	0	0	0	0	0
Independent Police Complaints Commission	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0	0

	2001–02		2002–03		2003–04	
Department	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*	*R and D spend*	*Percentage of sponsored bodies total expenditure*
National Criminal Intelligence Service	0	0	0	0	0	0
National Crime Squad	0	0	242,000.00	0.16	99,000	0.06
Office for the Immigration Services Commissioner	0	0	0	0	0	0
Parole Board	0	0	0	0	0	0
Police Complaints Authority	0	0	0	0	0	0
Police Information Technology Organisation	0	0	0	0	843,150	1.00
Security Industry Authority	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,000,000.00	46
Youth Justice Board	1,251,846	0.4	1,970,907	0.6	1,516,726	0.4

Rural Policing

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will encourage *(a)* police authorities and *(b)* police forces to give higher priority to rural policing when allocating resources. [210671]

Ms Blears: It is a matter for each chief constable and police authority to decide how best to deploy the available resources across the force area, taking into account operational priorities and objectives.

We established the rural policing fund in 2000–01 in recognition of the additional costs incurred in delivering effective policing to the most sparsely populated areas in England and Wales. The fund remains a discrete £30 million pot each year, above main formula grant arrangements, to be spent at local discretion to improve policing in rural areas.

Sex Abuse (Historical Cases)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of individuals wrongly convicted of historical sex abuse have been awarded compensation in each of the last five years. [207326]

Paul Goggins: Records of cases in which compensation has been paid for wrongful conviction, under either the statutory or ex gratia schemes, are not kept in such a way that would enable the information required to be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the findings of the joint Metropolitan Police Service and the Institute of Psychiatry research project to assess the veracity of historical allegations of childhood sexual abuse made by adults. [207333]

Ms Blears: The Home Office had not been apprised of this research. Detective Chief Inspector Parker of the Metropolitan Police Service informs that he is conducting some research in conjunction with the Institute of Psychiatry as part of a doctorate but has yet to publish it. I also understand that he gave evidence to the Home Affairs Committee in 2002 about the aims of his research, but it has yet reach conclusions.

Sikh Community

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will revise the statutory code of practice to ensure that all public bodies separately recognise and monitor Sikhs for the purposes of the Race Relations Act 2000. [211291]

Fiona Mactaggart: I do not intend to revise the current Statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality. In the Statutory Code public authorities are encouraged to use the same ethnic classification system as the one used in the 2001 census. This approach ensures consistency, allowing comparisons to be made over time and across different areas. However, the Statutory Code provides public authorities the flexibility to adapt the categories to fit local circumstances, provided these are the same as, or similar to, those used in the 2001 census.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the Indian High Commission concerning India's opposition to the separate recognition and monitoring of British Sikhs by public bodies in the UK. [211292]

Fiona Mactaggart: To date I have not received any representations from the Indian High Commission expressing their opposition to the separate recognition and monitoring of British Sikhs by public bodies in the UK.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government plan to undertake a comprehensive review of the proscription of the International Sikh Youth Federation. [211293]

Fiona Mactaggart: As a matter of policy, the Government does not comment on whether a particular organisation is being considered for proscription or de-proscription under Section 3 of the Terrorism Act 2000. Such decisions are only taken after the most careful consideration and on the basis of the best possible security advice.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will meet representatives from the *(a)* Sikh Federation (UK), *(b)* National Council of Gurdwaras, *(c)* Young Sikhs and *(d)* Sikh Secretariat to discuss matters of concern to the Sikh community. [211290]

Fiona Mactaggart: I met with the Council of Sikh Gurdwaras on 14 January 2005.

I have also met representatives of the Network of Sikh Organisations and the British Sikh Consultation Forum.

I agree that it is important that the Government engages with a wide range of organisations and views within the community, and have therefore asked officials in the Cohesion and Faiths Unit in the Home Office to undertake a series of meetings with Sikh Organisations. I will be keeping in close touch with my officials about Sikh issues and I have already signified my willingness to consider hosting a round-table meeting with a broad range of Sikh groups in due course.

Statement Validity Analysis

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has conducted into statement validity analysis; and what the findings were. [207448]

Paul Goggins: There has been no Home Office research into statement validity analysis.

Sulaiman Family

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will make a final decision in the case of the Sulaiman family (Home Office reference J1080623, J1080623/2, J1080623/3); and if he will make a statement. [211601]

Mr. Browne: Further inquiries need to be made before a decision can be reached in this case. Home Office officials have sent a letter to the Mrs Ibrahim's representatives requesting the relevant information.

Home Office officials are in frequent contact with the Sulaiman family's constituency MP, my hon. Friend the Member for Portsmouth, North (Syd Rapson) concerning the details of this case.

Work Permit Scheme

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what responsibilities the Work Permit Scheme places on an employer who makes redundant an employee employed under that scheme. [212038]

Mr. Browne: Work permit holders have the same employment rights under UK law as resident workers. Employers are also asked to inform the Home Office if a work permit holder's employment ceases prematurely.

Youth Justice

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost is of a six-month custodial sentence in a secure unit for a 14-year-old. [213177]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales has responsibility for commissioning and purchasing places in the secure estate. Its most recent calculation of the average cost (regardless of age) of a six month custodial sentence in a local authority secure children's home is £92,625.

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost of a youth offending team's involvement with a juvenile was in the last year for which figures are available. [213178]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The average cost in 2003–04 was just over £1,300 per disposal. This is based on YOTs' total expenditure of £243 million divided by the 185,000 disposals given to offenders aged 10–17.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Disease

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the incidence of alcohol-related health problems in people over 60. [210662]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on hospital admission, where the primary diagnosis or cause code shows the admission was alcohol-related is shown in the table. Other data on incidence of alcohol-related health problems is not available specifically for the age range "over 60".

Counts of finished in-year admissions where there was a primary diagnosis code or cause code for selected alcohol related diseases. Age at admissions 61 years plus. National health service hospitals, England 2003–04

Primary diagnosis		*Admissions*
F10	Mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol	3,267
	F10.0—Acute intoxication	842
	F10.1—Harmful use	399
	F10.2—Dependence syndrome	908
	F10.3—Withdrawal state	737
	F10.4—Withdrawal state with delirium	108
	F10.5—Psychotic disorder	32
	F10.6—Amnesic syndrome	60
	F10.7—Residual and late-onset psychotic disorder	121
	F10.8—Other mental and behavioural disorders	8
	F10.9—Unspecified mental and behavioural disorders	52
K70	Alcoholic liver disease	2,588
T51	Toxic effect of alcohol	50
Cause code		
X45	Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol	32

Notes:

1. A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the datayear. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
2. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
3. The cause code is a supplementary code that indicates the nature of any external cause of injury, poisoning or other adverse effects.
4. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

HES, Department of Health.

Cancer

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will set a deadline for ending the current variation in the prescribing of anti-cancer drugs as recommended by the Public Accounts Committee in its Report on tackling cancer in England, HC 166; [212214]

(2) what assessment he has made of the relative contribution of *(a)* delay in referral from general practitioners and *(b)* delay in carrying out diagnostic tests to late diagnosis identified by the Public Accounts Committee in its report on Tackling Cancer in England, HC166 of (i) cancer, (ii) brain cancer, (iii) lung cancer, (iv) breast cancer, (v) prostate cancer, (vi) childhood leukaemia and (vii) cancer of the gastro-intestinal tract. [213144]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We are considering the recommendations in the Public Accounts Committee report and will respond in due course.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial resources have been made available for further *(a)* research into cancer and *(b)* increasing public awareness of the causes of cancer. [208890]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 19 January 2005]:* In the NHS Cancer Plan, the Government stated that we would be investing an additional £20 million each year in the infrastructure for cancer research and an extra £4 million on prostate cancer research by 2003. These funding levels have been achieved.

The national health service reported spending £104 million in 2001–02, 103 million in 2002–03, and £113 million in 2003–04 on research relating to cancer from research and development support funding allocations.

The Department has funded a number of projects through the voluntary sector to raise awareness of cancer and has commissioned several pieces of research that will provide information on why patients delay seeking help from their general practitioner when symptoms become apparent.

We plan to set up a pilot programme to raise public awareness of the symptoms and signs of cancer later this year. We will then evaluate whether people with symptoms present earlier for diagnosis and treatment as a result.

Mr. Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what resources he is making available to the National Cancer Research Institute and Clinical Studies Group on Alternative Therapies; and what assessment he has made of research in this area. [209469]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 18 January 2005]:* The Department is contributing £130,000 a year toward the running costs of the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and currently plans to make available some £7.6 million over the period 2004 to 2010 in support of NCRI's work programme.

The work of the NCRI complementary therapies clinical studies development group is supported by the co-ordinating centre for the national cancer research network. The network is funded by the Department.

The Department issued a call for research proposals on "The role of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) in the Care of Patients with Cancer" in the summer of 2002. Three projects were commissioned as a result, details of which can be found on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/research/. Two of these projects are due to end later this year and the third in 2006.

The Department supports research capacity in CAM through its £3.4 million complementary and alternative medicine personal award scheme. Two calls have successfully created a cohort of 18 CAM researchers at the doctoral and postdoctoral level who are working on a broad range of research issues.

Dentists

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to conclude negotiations on the new NHS dentists' contracts; and if he will make a statement. [210676]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I confirm that preparations are on course for the introduction of new contractual arrangements for national health service dentistry by April 2006. The British Dental Association has welcomed our decision that full implementation of the reforms will now take place to a longer timescale.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many extra dentists he plans to recruit; and how many of them he expects to *(a)* come from overseas recruitment and *(b)* be existing dentists returning to the NHS. [211076]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* We plan to increase the number of dentists by 1,000 whole time equivalent by October 2005. This is based on approximately two thirds from domestic and overseas recruitment approximately one third from increased activity from existing national health service dentists, using the £50 million access funds made available for 2004–05.

Diagnostic and Treatment Centres

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many and what percentage of the *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses employed by private diagnostic and treatment centres with contracts with the NHS were previously employed by the NHS. [213170]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* Independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) adhere to a strict policy of additionality. ISTCs are not allowed to recruit any member of staff currently employed by, or employed during the previous six months, by the national health service. However, individuals are free to take employment in ISTCs provided that, they have not worked in the NHS during the preceding six-month period.

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training is required for audiologists qualified to fit digital hearing aids within the NHS. [210240]

Dr. Ladyman: Audiologists currently fitting digital hearing aids in the national health service are required to have completed one of the three courses accredited by the British Academy of Audiology:

MSc (audiology) plus certificate of audiological competence

British Association of Audiologists part I and II

Diploma in hearing therapy.

From 2005, the only entry qualification will be a BSc in audiology, which will provide sole access to the statutory register from 2008–09. From late 2005, all NHS audiologists will also be required to register with the Health Professions Council.

Dioxins and PCBs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research he has conducted into the levels of *(a)* dioxins and *(b)* PCBs found in (i) wild salmon, (ii) farmed salmon and (iii) flame retardants; and what figures were produced by that research. [210976]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I am informed by the Food Standards Agency that samples of salmon were included in a survey for dioxins and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in marine fish carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food during 1994–96 and a further study by the Food Standards Agency in 2003. The levels which were found are shown in the table.

Survey	*Salmon type (number of samples)*	*Dioxins*	*PCBs*	*Total*
		nanograms World Health Organisation Toxic Equivalent/kilogram fresh weight		
(1994–96)	Farmed (3)	0.8–0.9	2.2–2.7	3.1–3.5
	Wild (1)	0.9	1.3	2.2
	Unspecified[1] (8)	0.6–1.0	1.6–3.0	2.2–4.0
(2003)	Farmed only (3)	0.5–0.8	1.5–2.0	2.0–2.8

[1] Five samples were labelled as "retail salmon" and three just as "salmon".

We have not conducted a survey of flame-retardants, which, like dioxins and PCBs, are environmental contaminants, in salmon, although a survey is currently looking at dioxins, PCBs and brominated flame-retardants in farmed and wild fish and shellfish.

Drug Rehabilitation

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many drug rehabilitation *(a)* units and *(b)* beds have been established in Stoke-on-Trent in each year since 1997. [210856]

Miss Melanie Johnson: There are no drug rehabilitation units or beds in Stoke-on-Trent. The Stoke-on-Trent drug action team commissions rehabilitation services from outside the area.

Full details of drug rehabilitation units can be found on the National Treatment Agency's (NTA) residential services directory at www.nta.nhs.uk/residentialdirectory/index.html. The NTA has published this information from summer 2003. Data before this date are not available.

Foundation Hospitals (Borrowing Limits)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received from the independent regulator for foundation hospitals regarding an increase in borrowing limits by the hospitals. [211570]

Mr. Hutton: Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of national health service foundation trusts (NHSFTs), is an independent corporate body established under the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. It is Monitor's responsibility to authorise, monitor and regulate NHSFTs.

Monitor is required to make a prudential borrowing code (the code) for determining the limit on the total amount of borrowing by NHSFTs and to consult the Secretary of State and prospective NHSFTs before doing so in accordance with section 12 of the Act.

I am advised by the chairman of Monitor that the terms of a draft code were issued for consultation during the summer of 2004 and that Monitor's board considered the outcome at its formal meetings of 30 November 2004 and 26 January 2005. The chairman also consulted me on the terms of the draft code in December 2004 in my capacity as Minister with responsibility for NHSFT policy. I understand from the chairman that Monitor's board hopes to shortly finalise the code, following which it will be laid before Parliament at the earliest available opportunity in accordance with section 12(4) of the Act.

General Practitioners (Southend-on-Sea)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were on general practitioner lists in Southend-on-Sea in *(a)* 1990, *(b)* 2000 and *(c)* 2004; and if he will make a statement. [213164]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The number of patients registered with a general practitioner in the Southend-on-Sea area for 1990 is not held centrally. However, the numbers of patients registered with a GP for the years 2000 and 2003 (latest published data available) are shown in the table by primary care group (PCG) for the year 2000 and primary care trust (PCT) for the year 2003. However, the Department is not able to map boundary changes between PCGs and PCTs the PCG data are not directly comparable to the PCT data.

Patients of unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] for Essex SHA and specified PCGs/PCTs: 1991, 2000 and 2003[2]

Numbers (headcount)

		1991	*2000*	*2003[2]*
Essex strategic health authority	Q03	1,578,918	1,648,879	1,690,519
Of which:				
Castlepoint PCG	4NK20	—	84,542	—
Rochford PCG	4TQ56	—	84,565	—
Southend-On-Sea PCG	4KH89	—	174,881	—
Castlepoint and Rochford PCT	5JP	—	—	173,946
Southend-On-Sea PCT	5AK	—	—	177,522

[1] UPEs include General Medical Service unrestricted principals, Personal Medical Service (PMS) contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs.

[2] 2003 Patient data has been revised from previously published figures.

Note:

Data as at 1 October 1991 and 30 September 2000 and 2003.

Source:

Department of Health General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Health Deprivation Indicators

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the utility of existing health deprivation indicators for assessing the relative health deprivation of rural areas. [211544]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is committed to matching the allocation of funding with the relative need of all areas.

A weighted capitation formula is used to determine each primary care trust's target share of available resources, which then inform allocations. Revenue funding is therefore allocated to primary care trusts on the basis of the relative needs of their populations.

The Department has recently carried out a substantial review of the weighted capitation formula and the new formula introduced from 2003–04 gives much greater weight to the needs of deprived communities. In this way, the new formula provides a better measure of health need in all areas.

Health Service Staff (Stoke)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* administrative staff are employed in the (i) Stoke-on-Trent North Primary Care Trust, (ii) Stoke-on-Trent South Primary Care Trust and (iii) North Staffordshire University Hospital Trust. [211706]

Dr. Ladyman: Table 1 shows the number of doctors, nurses and administrative staff at North Stoke Primary Care Trust (PCT), South Stoke PCT and the University Hospital of North Staffordshire National Health Service Trust.

Table 2 shows the whole time equivalents (WTEs) at each organisation.

Table 1: Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) medical and dental staff[1], general medical practitioners (GMPs)[2], qualified nurses including practice nurses and admin. and clerical staff[3] for selected organisations, as at 30 September 2003

	All doctors	of which: HCHS doctors[1]	General medical practitioners[2]	Qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	HCHS admin. and clerical[3]	GP practice admin. and clerical
North Stoke PCT	71	1	70	406	229	n/a
South Stoke PCT	70	0	70	364	212	n/a
University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	575	575	0	2,148	1,270	n/a

Table 2: Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) medical and dental staff[1], general medical practitioners (GMPs)[2], qualified nurses including practice nurses and admin. and clerical staff[3] for selected organisations, as at 30 September 2003

	All doctors	of which: HCHS doctors[1]	General medical practitioners[2]	Qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	HCHS admin. and clerical[3]	GP practice admin. and clerical
North Stoke PCT	64	1	63	266	187	176
South Stoke PCT	66	0	66	256	170	146
University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	570	570	0	1,858	1,126	0

[1] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part time in hospitals.

[2] All practitioners includes general medical service (GMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, GP retainers, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career schemes and GP returners.

[3] HCHS administrative staff are made up of senior managers and managers and admin and clerical staff.

n/a—not available

Note:

GP WTE data has been estimated using the results from the GMP workload survey: full-time = 1.00 WTE, three quarter time = 0.69 WTE, Job share = 0.65 WTE, half time = 0.60 WTE.

Sources:

Department of Health GMS and PMS statistics.

Department of Health non-medical workforce census.

Department of Health medical and dental workforce statistics.

Healthy Living Initiatives

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the contribution of *(a)* healthy living centres and *(b)* healthy lifestyle workers to public health; and if he will make funding available to ensure their continuation. [210088]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Healthy living centres (HLCs) support the work of statutory and voluntary organisations in reducing health inequalities and improving health in local communities. The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) and the Department have commissioned evaluations of the programme for the United Kingdom and England respectively. Interim findings are available on the BLF website at www.nof.org.uk. The final reports are due later this year.

The Department allocates no funding centrally to HLCs. Primary care trusts and other statutory bodies are able to support local HLCs from their allocations as part of their local delivery plans for health improvement.

The health improvement workforce in the national health service provides leadership and training in health improvement, supporting local communities and developing a health-promoting NHS. However, healthy lifestyle workers, as such, do not form a recognised group which can be evaluated formally.

In the White Paper, "Choosing Health", the valuable contribution of community-based workers is described, for example those in the voluntary sector. But such support is patchy and fragmented and therefore, from 2006, accredited NHS trainers will form part of the wider workforce geared towards prevention of ill health and as part of a comprehensive health improvement service. They will be providing support to people in disadvantaged areas and, progressively from 2007, across the country. The funding details will be published in due course.

Hearing Impairment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the value of Palantype speech to text reporting machines to hearing impaired people; and if he will make a statement. [200021]

Dr. Ladyman: None. However, the Department fully recognises the value to hearing-impaired people of speech-to-text technology.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons no compensation is payable to the families of those who died before 29 August 2003 from Hepatitis C caused through NHS treatment with blood and blood products. [212098]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The principle behind the Hepatitis C ex-gratia payment scheme is to target available resources to help alleviate the suffering of people living with the virus. The payments are not compensation aid; the scheme's eligibility criteria reflect this.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what expenditure is planned for the hepatitis C awareness campaign in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [213198]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Estimated central expenditure on hepatitis C awareness-raising will be £780,000 in 2004–05 and £1,500,000 in 2005–06.

Local Authority Caring Services

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many local authorities have sought determination from him in relation to which local authority is responsible for people for whom more than one local authority had a caring responsibility in each year since 2001; and how many decisions on such determinations he has made in each year. [210466]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* The number of local authorities that sought determinations of "ordinary residence" under section 32(3) of the National Assistance Act 1948, and the number of those determinations made in each year since 2001 are shown in the table.

	Number of applications made	*Number of determinations made*
2001	5	1
2002	2	1
2003	5	5
2004	5	6

MRI (Alliance Medical)

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received about the MRI scanning service provided by Alliance Medical; and what proposals he has for monitoring this service. [209630]

Mr. Hutton: Representation has been received from the Society of Radiographers, the British Medical Association, hon. and right hon. Members and the public.

Contract monitoring is carried out regularly with Alliance Medical and a benchmarking audit of image quality and reports is to be undertaken in 2005. In addition, Alliance Medical figures for November 2004 show that 96 per cent., of respondents rated the service above average or excellent.

MRSA

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children *(a)* contracted MRSA infections in hospitals and *(b)* died from MRSA infections in each of the last seven years. [209262]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Health Protection Agency's voluntary reporting system is the only national dataset providing information by age on cases of methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) bloodstream infections. This is shown in the table. The system does not distinguish between infections acquired in hospital and those acquired elsewhere.

Reports of MRSA blood isolates in England in children aged 0–14 years

	Number of reports
1997	28
1998	40
1999	60
2000	68
2001	66
2002	71
2003	81

Source:
Health Protection Agency.

Data on deaths from MRSA are not available, but a study by the Office for National Statistics, which reviewed death certificates from 1997–2002, revealed MRSA as a contributory factor or underlying cause for one child under 16 in each of the years 1997–2002.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to ensure that district nurses are informed that a patient discharged from hospital contracted MRSA while in hospital. [210275]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Current professional guidance already recommends that general practitioners and other health service workers involved in the care of patients with methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" infection and colonisation should be informed when they are being discharged.

Sir John Stanley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rate of MRSA infection in the UK is; and what information he collects on the rate in other countries. [211030]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* Mandatory surveillance of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bloodstream infections in England started in April 2001 and the information requested is shown in the table.

Period April to March	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*
2001–02	7,250	0.17
2002–03	7,384	0.17
2003–04	7,647	0.18

Surveillance of healthcare associated infection in other countries in the United Kingdom is a matter for the devolved administrations.

We are not aware of any comparable international data for rates of MRSA bloodstream infections per 1,000 bed days.

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA were reported at *(a)* Scunthorpe Hospital and *(b)* Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby in each year for which figures are available. [211143]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Reported cases of methicillin resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) at Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals national health service trust, which includes Scunthorpe Hospital and Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby are shown in the table. Separate figures are not available for each hospital in the trust.

Period	*Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports*	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed-days*
April 2001 to March 2002	36	0.13
April 2002 to March 2003	34	0.12
April 2003 to March 2004	28	0.09

Source:

Reports under the mandatory MRSA bacteraemia surveillance system—Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the funding allocated by the Department to multiple sclerosis specialist nurses for the financial year 2005–06 has been confirmed in writing to the primary care trusts concerned. [208856]

Dr. Ladyman: Funding for multiple sclerosis (MS) specialist nurses' posts already established under the MS risk-sharing scheme is included, on a recurrent basis, within primary care trust (PCT) revenue resource allocations. Eight PCTs were invited to apply for funding to support the establishment of additional posts, from 2005–06. These PCTs will be advised of the position of their bids on completion of an on-going review of all Departmental central budgets.

NHS Choice Pilot Schemes

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS choice pilots schemes have been subject to formal external evaluation; what plans he has to distribute the results of these evaluations to *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* strategic health authorities; and what plans he has to commission external projects to evaluate other NHS choice pilots. [210817]

Mr. Hutton: The coronary heart disease choice pilot was formally evaluated by the Picker Institute in 2003. The largest choice pilot, the London patient choice project, has been formally evaluated by three separate organisations on different strands of its work. The final reports on the London pilot will be available shortly for circulation.

The Department commissioned the research organisation Dr. Foster to undertake a research study on the implications of offering choice in three strategic health authorities—Trent, Dorset and Somerset, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. The findings of this research have been shared widely and are available under patient choice research on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/policyandguidance/patient choice/fs/en.

Evaluation of the south cataract choice pilot will be starting shortly and the findings will be available later this year. In addition to these formal evaluations, the pilots have generated valuable learning for the implementation of choice which is being shared with primary care trusts and strategic health authorities. Other national health service choice pilots are evaluated locally.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to encourage general practitioners to use choose and book; and what plans he has to monitor the use by general practitioners of choose and book. [210820]

Mr. Hutton: The Department is running an intensive programme of stakeholder engagement and communications with general practitioners and other primary care stakeholders to explain how the choose and book service will work and its benefits for national health service patients and for general practices. This includes choose and book demonstrations, peer-to-peer meetings and workshops to encourage GP involvement.

The Department is currently working with the NHS to develop a monitoring framework. This will enable primary care trusts (PCTs), strategic health authorities and the Department to monitor progress in driving forward the use of the choose and book system for GP referrals to consultant outpatient appointments.

On 19 January 2005, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, announced a £95 million incentive scheme to recognise and reward the key role that PCTs will need to play in engaging primary care stakeholders and encouraging and supporting general practitioners to use choose and book.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to *(a)* monitor and *(b)* support the ability of primary care trusts to commission services as patient choice is introduced. [210821]

Mr. Hutton: The Department issued a self-assessment and planning tool to local health communities in August 2004 to help establish local baselines and monitor subsequent progress in delivering patient choice and booking. This included a number of measures to assess preparedness for commissioning services from a range of providers to support patient choice. The tool also enables the national choose and book team to target support to local health communities on the basis of their relative preparedness.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to ensure that the ability of patients to exercise choice in the provider of their elective surgery does not exclude hard-to-reach groups. [210822]

Mr. Hutton: It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs) to provide or arrange targeted support for patients to help them make their choice of hospital. This support needs to be appropriate to the needs of the PCT's local population. The range of services PCTs should consider includes direct support from general practitioners and practice staff and support from the patient advice and liaison service.

Where PCTs identify particular needs for support, they may need to consider additional investment to support choice through use of voluntary sector organisations and/or specialist patient care advisers.

To support this, the Department is developing guidelines for PCTs wishing to contract with voluntary and community sector organisations to provide advocacy and support to patients to help them make a choice of hospital. We are also working with a range of stakeholders to better understand the information and support needs of patients at risk of exclusion. The results of this work will allow us both to develop appropriate information at national level and to support the national health service in implementing choice equitably for their local populations.

NHS Cleaning Services

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cleaners are employed at *(a)* Scunthorpe Hospital and *(b)* Diana Princess of Wales Hospital, Grimsby. [211135]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department does not routinely collect this information.

Parkinson's

Mr. McWalter: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the extent to which the needs of those who suffer from Parkinson's disease are being met; and what assessment he has made of the extent to which nursing specialists can contribute to the meeting of these needs. [212260]

Dr. Ladyman: The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions, due to be published soon, will have a particular focus on the needs of people with neurological disease—including those with Parkinson's disease. As part of the work in producing this NSF, an external reference group drawn from service users and carers as well as professionals and voluntary groups has advised on the content.

The Department has commissioned the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) to develop guidelines for the diagnosis, management and treatment of Parkinson's disease in primary and secondary care. Due to be published in 2006, they will provide guidance on the care pathway for treating Parkinson's disease and getting the balance right between primary and secondary care interventions.

The development of Parkinson's disease nurse specialists (PDNS) has been a key step forward in providing better care closer to home for those with this disease. The Parkinson's Disease Society has published a report, "Changing Roles—The Impact of Parkinson's Disease Nurse Specialists", showing that PDNSs improve the quality of life for individual patients and their families and carers, without raising the cost of care.

Social Care (Pay)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the hourly average pay rate for workers in the social care sector. [213137]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for local government employers to determine the rates of pay for workers in the social care sector and to encourage their private and voluntary sector partners to offer comparable terms and conditions of service.

Supported Living

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much the Government has allocated for the support element of supported living in the next three years; [211796]

(2) what mechanisms are in place for co-ordination of the housing, support/care, day services elements of supported living; and who is responsible for that co-ordination. [211797]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities and health trusts are required to work together to develop and co-ordinate services to support people in all aspects of independent living in the community.

These services are funded through the local authority personal social services (PSS) budget and the supporting people programme. Figures are shown in the following table.

£ billion

	Total resources for adult PSS	*Supporting people*
2005–06	11.526	1.72
2006–07	11.842	1.70
2007–08	12.313	1.70

Surgical Beds

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average number of medical patients occupying surgical beds was in each local health authority in each of the last seven years. [210108]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Data on the weekly average number of medical outliers (medical patients occupying surgical beds) by strategic health authority (SHA) for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are shown in the table.

Data for 2004–05 are not available as they are now a voluntary item and not comprehensively collected. Data are not available by SHA prior to 2002–03.

SHA	*Average number of medical outliers per week*
2003–04	
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	243
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	89
Birmingham and the Black Country	140
Cheshire and Merseyside	193
County Durham and Tees Valley	51
Cumbria and Lancashire	184
Essex	51
Greater Manchester	254
Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	111
Kent and Medway	86
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	130
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	191
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	116
North Central London	94
North East London	97
North West London	64
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	64
Shropshire and Staffordshire	119
Somerset and Dorset	116
South East London	92
South West London	51
South West Peninsula	126
South Yorkshire	133
Surrey and Sussex	149
Thames Valley	92
Trent	121
West Midlands South	113
West Yorkshire	102
England	3,370
2002–03	
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	286
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	89
Birmingham and the Black Country	155
Cheshire and Merseyside	215
County Durham and Tees Valley	53
Cumbria and Lancashire	233
Essex	78
Greater Manchester	284
Hampshire and the Isle of Wight	127
Kent and Medway	87
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	101
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	198
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	100
North Central London	95
North East London	106
North West London	90
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	78
Shropshire and Staffordshire	141
Somerset and Dorset	120
South East London	77
South West London	43
South West Peninsula	169
South Yorkshire	98
Surrey and Sussex	207
Thames Valley	163
Trent	145
West Midlands South	136
West Yorkshire	109
England	3,782

Waiting Lists

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are waiting for treatment in each Government Office region in England. [211947]

Mr. Hutton: The Department does not collect waiting times information by Government office region.

Ward Environment Budgets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been allocated for ward environment budgets; and how that funding has been spent. [208080]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Between 2001–02 and 2003–04, about £83 million was allocated to the ward environment budget initiative announced in April 2000. To reduce bureaucracy, information is no longer collected centrally on the allocation of these budgets, which are matters to be determined locally.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Age Discrimination

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his Department's policy is towards age discrimination. [202510]

Mr. Pearson: The Northern Ireland Office aims to ensure that its staff are treated fairly and equally by promoting equal opportunities policies whereby no employee or job applicant is unfairly discriminated against either directly or indirectly on a number of grounds, including age. All staff are provided with a copy of this policy.

In compliance with its statutory duty under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the Department has due regard to the promotion of equality of opportunity between persons in nine specified categories, which include persons of different ages. Both internal and outward focused policies and practices are screened to ensure they do not have an adverse impact on any of the nine categories, including those of different ages.

Grammar Schools

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils are enrolled for grammar schools in Northern Ireland; and what the change in enrolment numbers has been since the baseline figures used by the Costello Inquiry. [211636]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson) on 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 304W.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many jobs have been created in Northern Ireland as a result of foreign direct investment in the last three financial years; and what the average cost per job of Invest Northern Ireland grants and loans was in each year. [211933]

Mr. Gardiner: As the employment associated with Inward Investment projects typically builds up over a three to four year period, it is not meaningful to measure job creation at an early stage. However, the following table shows the number of jobs promoted (expected to be created) as a result of foreign direct investment projects secured between 2001–02 and 2003–04 and the assistance offered to companies to promote these jobs (assistance during 2001–02 was provided by the Industrial Development Board and assistance during 2002–03 and 2003–04 was provided by Invest NI).

Financial year	*Expected jobs promoted*	*Assistance offered for expected jobs promoted (£)*	*Cost per expected job promoted (£)*
2001–02	2,526	27,478,799	10,878
2002–03	1,033	7,171,044	6,942
2003–04	2,053	14,481,420	7,054
Grand total	5,612	49,131,263	8,755

Mr. Trimble: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much Invest Northern Ireland has spent in the last three financial years on acquiring equity in local companies. [211934]

Mr. Gardiner: The amount that Invest NI has spent in the last three financial years acquiring equity in local companies is as follows:

£

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05 to date*
Locally owned companies	3,475,000	8,454,500	2,823,026
Local companies owned by GB parent	1,350,000	599,997	0
Local companies owned by overseas or ROI parent	0	2,177,179	0
Total	4,825,000	11,232,276	2,823,026

Juvenile Justice Centre

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what training is available to staff in the Juvenile Justice Centre in relation to the suitability of methods of restraint used. [210943]

Mr. Spellar: This is an operational responsibility of the Chief Executive of the Youth Justice Agency of Northern Ireland (Bill Lockhart). He has advised me that staff are trained in Physical Control in Care (PCC). PCC is the only physical restraint procedure used in the Juvenile Justice Centre and has been approved by the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) and the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI).

Initial staff training involves a five day PCC course delivered by qualified PCC instructors. Refresher training for all staff is delivered over a two day period at least twice a year.

National Assets

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which assets *(a)* the Northern Ireland Office and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Departments plan to dispose of in each of the next three financial years. [210636]

Mr. Pearson: The following table lists the assets which the Northern Ireland Office and the 11 Northern Ireland Departments currently plan to dispose over the next three financial years. In respect of the 11 NI Departments, further work will be undertaken on this issue in taking forward the NI Investment Strategy, and in the context of the Lyons Report "Towards Better Management of Public Sector Assets".

	Financial year		
Department	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
NIO	Routine IT and office equipment rolling replacement Housing stock with a total value of £3.6 million		
DARD	1 Dwelling	Land at Tullywiggan (0.42 hectares)	—
	Plot of land at Loughall (25 acres)	Land at Stifehill (1.28 hectares)	—
	Plot of land at Crossnacreevy	—	—
	Land at Walkways (18.2 hectares)	—	—
	Land at Tullyhogue (20.5 hectares)	—	—
	Land at Oldstone Road (0.42 hectares)	—	—
	Landrover	—	—
	3 Renault vans	—	—
	4 vehicles	—	—
	4 houses	—	—
	Routine IT and office equipment rolling replacement		
DCAL	Lough Melvin Car Park, Gavros, Garrison, Co. Fermanagh	—	—

	Financial year		
Department	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
	Routine IT and office equipment rolling replacement		
DE	Over 300 PCs—to be replaced 2 motor vehicles over the next three years		
DEL	—	—	Training Centre at Felden, Newtownabbey, subject to alternative accommodation being found for training activities
DFP	17/19 Rainey Street, Magherafelt	Armagh House, Ormeau Avenue, Belfast	—
	—	20 College Gardens, Belfast	—
	—	25/27 Church Street, Antrim	—
	—	178/180 Shankill Road, Belfast	—
	Fixed assets in the areas of ICT, transport, and plant and machinery are subject to various rolling replacement policies and individual assessments		
DETI	None	None	None
DHSSPS	Hillcroft Special Care School, Newtownabbey	Portion of Central Services Agency Building at Adelaide Street, Belfast	Ormeau Road Health Centre, Omagh
	Land at Donaghanie Road, Omagh (40 acres)	Balance of site behind Drumreagh College, Omagh (18.6 acres)	—
	4.75 acre site at Drumnakilly Road, Omagh	Fields 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14 and 15 (70 acres) at Downshire Hospital, Downpatrick	—
	Drumreagh College Site, Omagh (18.41 acres)	15.96 acres at Drumcoo, Enniskillen	—
	15 acre site at Muckamore Abbey Hospital	Watterson's Farm, Omagh (40 acres)	—
	18 acre site at Scroggy Road, Limavady	—	—
	0.75 acre site at Scroggy Road, Limavady	—	—
	Field 27, 28 and 29 (20 acres) at Downshire Hospital, Downpatrick	—	—
	0.68 acre site at Omagh General Hospital, Omagh	—	—
DOE	Routine IT and office equipment rolling replacement		
DRD	Routine IT and office equipment rolling replacement		
OFMDFM	Former Royal Irish Regiment base, Magherafelt	—	—

Road Schemes

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the major road schemes likely to commence construction in Northern Ireland within the next 12 months; [211518]

Mr. Spellar: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 2 February 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question asking for a list of the major road schemes likely to commence construction in Northern Ireland within the next 12 months (211518). I have been asked to reply as the issue raised falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Rods Service.

I can advise you that the major road schemes likely to commence construction in the next 12 months are as follows:

A1 Newry to Dundalk Link Road—the Northern Ireland section of this scheme will upgrade 4.3km of route to high standard dual carriageway and include one grade separated junction at an estimated cost of £33 million.

The first package of the Roads Service Design Build Finance Operate (DBFO) programme is expected to be awarded in 2005 and it is possible that construction of the following two capital elements of the package may start construction in the next 12 months:

the provision of on-slips to the M2 motorway at Antrim Hospital at an estimated cost of £2 million; and

improvements to the M1/Westlink, costing an estimated £75 million, which will include the widening of 2.8km of the M1 motorway to 3 lanes in each direction (Stockman's Lane to Broadway), the widening of 1.6km of the Westlink dual carriageway to 3 lanes in each direction (Broadway to Divis Street) and the provision of 2 grade separated junctions (underpasses) at Broadway and Grosvenor Road.

However, the timing of the construction of these schemes will not be confirmed until later in the negotiations for the award of this DBFO package.

Of course, the commencement of these schemes on the Eastern Sea Board Corridor should be viewed in the context of recently constructed and ongoing schemes throughout Northern Ireland, as well as those schemes planned to start in 2006–07.

For example, schemes recently constructed that serve the North West include the Strabane Bypass Stage II and Limavady Bypass both opened to traffic in September 2003, and the Toome Bypass that was opened to traffic in March 2004. Several carriageway-widening schemes have also been completed on the key corridors serving the north-west within the past year, including A37 Springwell Climbing Lane (Coleraine to Limavady) and A6 schemes at Munreery (Derry to Dungiven), Curran (Maghera to Castledawson) and Castledawson (roundabout towards Maghera under construction). It is also hoped to commence further widening schemes at A37 Gortcorbies (Limavady to Coleraine) and A6 Kilcattan (extension of Burntollet West—towards Belfast) and Mulderg (to balance Munreery) over the next couple of years.

In addition the planning and preparation of the A6 dualling scheme from Randalstown to Castledawson and the dualling of the A2 at Broadbridge (Eglinton to Campsie), is progressing well with construction expected to start in 2006–07 (subject to satisfactory economic analysis, availability of finance and the completion of the statutory procedures).

You will also be aware that the schemes to provide the Skeoge Link and upgrade the A2 Buncrana road are being taken forward in consultation with the developers of the proposed extensive development in the area. While the timing of these improvements will be dependent on agreement with the developers, the first element of these improvements is expected in 2005–06.

I hope this information is helpful.

School Performance Tables

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will re-introduce school performance tables in Northern Ireland. [211639]

Mr. Gardiner: I have no plans to re-introduce school performance tables in Northern Ireland. The information which the tables contained has for some time been available in respect of each school in its prospectus. With the Freedom of Information Act now in force, the information in respect of all schools will be released by the Department of Education in response to specific requests.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost; [202253]

(2) when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Chichester on 1 December 2004, ref 202253. [210495]

Mr. Paul Murphy: During the period 31 March 2003 to 31 March 2004 Northern Ireland Office special advisors travelled domestically on 35 occasions. It is not possible because of the nature of the travel to form this information into return journeys. The details of each journey and associated costs are set out in the following table.

From	*To*	*Cost (£)*
Belfast	Cardiff	57.00
Bristol	Belfast	61.50
Cardiff	Belfast	56.50
Belfast	Cardiff	72.36
Liverpool	Belfast	71.50
Cardiff	Belfast	48.00
Belfast	London	135.20
Cardiff	Belfast	48.00
Belfast	Cardiff	135.00
Cardiff	Belfast	72.31
Cardiff	Belfast	72.31
Belfast	Cardiff	82.86
Belfast	Cardiff	47.50
Cardiff	Belfast	71.61
Belfast	London	134.90
Cardiff	Belfast	168.50
Cardiff	Belfast	53.50
Belfast	Cardiff	323.00
Belfast	Cardiff	57.00
Cardiff	Belfast	128.10
London	Belfast	128.10
Cardiff	Belfast	109.00
Cardiff	Belfast	35.00
Cardiff	Belfast	170.00
Cardiff	Belfast	47.50
Belfast	Cardiff	42.00
Cardiff	Belfast	57.00
Cardiff	Belfast	39.00
Belfast	Cardiff	135.20
Belfast	London	135.20
Belfast	London	278.30
London	Belfast	46.94
Bristol	Belfast	278.30
Belfast	London	150.20
Cardiff	Belfast	249.10
Londonderry	London	77.96

During the same period special advisors made eight trips abroad. The details of the destinations and travel costs for these trips are set out in the following table. In all instances except the trips to Washington and New York/Washington/LA/San Francisco the expenditure does not include the cost of hotel accommodation and other associated expenses as it is not possible to isolate those figures which relate solely to special advisors from other costs.

	Cost (£)
Washington	4,981.00
Paris	500.00
Boston	5,102.65
Dublin	378.00
Rome	917.60
Ottawa/New York/Washington	7,166.79
Dublin	287.00
New York/Washington/LA/San Francisco	10,951.29

Ulster Scots Agency

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to announce the name of the new Chairman of the Ulster Scots Agency. [211967]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Government are actively seeking to appoint a new chairman of the Ulster Scots Agency. To this end, discussions with the parties remain on-going and an appointment will be made as quickly as possible.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 3 February 2005

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Crimes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many respondents to the British Crime Survey believed their assailants were under the influence of alcohol when they were assaulted in each year since the statistics were first compiled. [209247]

Ms Blears: The British Crime Survey (BCS) asks respondents whether they believed the offender was under the influence of drink. A table showing the trend for all BCS violence since this question was introduced in the 1996 BCS can be found on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/crimeew0203_tables_bvv.html#violent

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Keith Bradley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers who were resident in *(a)* the City of Manchester, *(b)* Greater Manchester, *(c)* the North West of England and *(d)* England had all financial support from the Government stopped in each of the last 12 months. [211348]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* The information requested is in the table. The figures have been compiled from internal management information data sources and show the position as at 26 January 2005. The figures show the number of asylum seekers living in the relevant area at the time support was stopped. The figures do not show how many people have remained in the relevant area since their support stopped.

Number of asylum seekers who had all financial support stopped in 2004[1]

Month	*England*	*North West*	*Greater Manchester*	*City of Manchester*
January	1,260	50	35	25
February	1,540	60	35	25
March	1,910	65	45	20
April	16,253	63	40	20
May	1,545	80	60	25
June	1,420	60	40	15
July	1,795	70	50	25
August	1,295	50	40	20
September	1,980	90	60	20
October	2,995	155	105	40
November	2,160	145	105	50
December	1,665	155	115	35
Total	21,190	1,040	735	315

[1] All figures are provisional and rounded to the nearest sum. Figures will not sum due to rounding.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the outcome of the consultation and review of in-country leave to remain application charges will be made available. [211890]

Mr. Browne: Responses to the consultation have been collated and analysed. The outcome of the consultation and the final fee levels will be announced in February 2005.

Cash in Transit Attacks

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cash in transit attacks have taken place in the UK in each of the last five years; how much cash has been stolen; and how many people were convicted for these attacks. [213529]

Ms Blears: The information requested is not available centrally. The statistics on recorded crime and court proceedings are not broken down to this level of detail.

Child Abuse

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* gender and *(b)* familial relationship to the child victim was of offenders in substantiated child abuse cases in each of the last five years, broken down by (i) physical abuse, (ii) emotional abuse, (iii) sexual abuse and (iv) cases of neglect. [209948]

Ms Blears: The information is not collected by the Home Office in the form requested. The available information is taken from the Home Office Court Proceedings Database and is given in the table. It relates to those found guilty of sexual offences against minors and cruelty to or neglect of children. It is not possible to determine the number of offenders found guilty of physical or emotional abuse against children. Neither is it possible to determine the gender of the child victim or the familial relationships as the individual circumstances of the offences are not collected.

Number of offenders found guilty at all courts for certain offences[1] *England and Wales 1999 to 2003*

Offence	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*
Sexual offences against minors[2]			
1999	2,691	33	2,724
2000	2,456	23	2,479
2001	2,388	22	2,410
2002	2,511	30	2,541
2003	2,402	32	2,434
Cruelty to or neglect of children[3]			
1999	199	270	469
2000	201	247	448
2001	192	223	415
2002	197	247	444
2003	223	271	494

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Excludes those sexual offences where the age of the victim cannot be identified in the wording of the offence.

[3] Offences against the Person Act 1861, sec 26 and the Children and Young Persons Act 1933.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were killed by their parents or carers in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [213114]

Ms Blears: Information on homicide is published annually in a Home Office Statistical Bulletin. The latest available information can be found in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 02/05—"Crime in England and Wales 2003/2004: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime". Table 1.04 gives data on victims under 16 years by relationship of victim to principal suspect. The Home Office does not collect statistics on carers as a separate category.

The website address for the publication is: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html

Christopher Alder

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions his Department has had with the Humberside Police Authority regarding the early retirement of the police officer involved in the Christopher Alder case; and if he will make a statement. [209661]

Ms Blears: The Home Department has not held discussions with Humberside Police Authority in relation to the retirement arrangements of any officers involved in the Christopher Alder case.

Humberside Police Authority did write to the Home Office on 12 November 2004 about applications for medical retirement they had received in respect of four officers linked to this case. An official from the Home Secretary's Private Office responded on 26 November 2004 stating that the Home Secretary was clear that any decision was entirely a matter for Humberside Police Authority.

The relevant procedures for such decisions are set out in Home Office Circular 3 of 2004 agreed last January by the Police Negotiating Board in the form of Joint Guidance. This guidance came into effect last July and copies are in the House Library.

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations his Department has received on the Christopher Alder case; and if he will make a statement. [209662]

Mr. Charles Clarke: During the last three months, the Home Office has received representations in the form of correspondence on three matters.

The first was from the Clerk to Humberside Police Authority regarding the ill health retirement of officers who were present at the death of Christopher Alder. The second, also from the Clerk to Humberside Police Authority, was regarding the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) review of the Christopher Alder case.

The third was from the solicitor's for the son of Christopher Alder regarding the Judicial Review of the Home Secretary's decision not to hold a public inquiry.

Coroners Courts

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many coroners courts operate within the Greater London area. [209255]

Paul Goggins: 12 dedicated coroners courts operate within the Greater London area, as follows:

East London coroner's district: Walthamstow; Romford

Inner North London coroner's district: St Pancras; Poplar

Inner South London coroner's district: Southwark

Inner West London coroner's district: Westminster

North London coroner's district: Hornsey

South London coroner's district: Croydon

West London coroner's district: Fulham; Uxbridge; Ealing; Kingston upon Thames.

The City of London coroner also has a dedicated court.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to answer the letter dated 8 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mrs. Ayesha Siddiqi. [210840]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 3 February 2005.

Sir Teddy Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he intends to reply to correspondence dated 21 December concerning a previous letter dated 21 November regarding a constituent Ms Christine Murgwisi, Reference M18542/4. [212049]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 2 February 2005]*: I replied to the hon. Member on 27 January 2005.

Custody Sergeants

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of possible merits of changing the role played by the custody sergeant in the criminal justice system. [208719]

Ms Blears: There are currently no changes proposed in respect of the role played by the custody sergeant as set out under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE). We are, however, proposing under Clause 111 of the Serious Organised Crime and Police Bill that chief officers of police should be able to develop a more flexible approach to the staffing of their custody suites by making use of police staff.

The Thematic Inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary published in July 2004 on Workforce Modernisation concluded that the role of police staff could be extended to perform that of the custody officer. The Report recognised the importance of suitable training and transitional arrangements; and identified that the ability to use staff custody officers would enable the release of experienced supervisors to front-line duties and could strengthen the independence of the custody officer role as set out in PACE.

We are proposing to ensure that these benefits can be fully assessed through establishing a programme of pilot sites looking at selection, training and practical application at the police station.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213267]

Fiona Mactaggart: Plan figures for the Home Office's departmental unallocated provision in 2005–06 were published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2004–05, Supplementary Budget Information (Cm 6133). Plan figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2005–06, Supplementary Budget Information.

EC Legislation

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy towards the amendments to the proposal to a Council Decision establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2005 to 2010, OJ C 318 volume 47 of 22 December 2004, regarding the inclusion of textual reference to *(a)* those in need of special medical treatment and *(b)* repatriation in conditions of dignity; and what his policy is towards the inclusion in the Commission text of measures taking account of gender-related issues. [211380]

Mr. Browne: The final text of the Council Decision of 2 December 2004 establishing the European Refugee Fund for the period 2005 to 2010 (2004/904/EC) published in the Official Journal on 28 December 2004 (OJ L 381 28.12.04 p.52) does not contain the words referred to in question, and the Government have expressed no view on their appropriateness.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned into the safety of iris scan enrolment for identity card applicants. [210161]

Mr. Browne: The Government have not commissioned any research into the safety of equipment used to record iris images. The supplier of the equipment which was used in the UK Passport Service biometric trial was required to certify that it complied with relevant Health and Safety legislation.

Missing Departmental Property

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many items of civil service property within his Department are unaccounted for, broken down by type. [205581]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not available centrally in the format requested and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. The table provides a breakdown of reported cash losses within the department by financial year since 2000.

Accounting period	*£000's*	*Percentage total outturn*
2000–01	143.7	0.000016
2001–02	34.8	0.0000033
2002–03	4,052	0.00031
2003–04	142	0.000012

These figures which are disclosed to Parliament under the losses note in the resource accounts, include cash losses due to physical loss of cash and/or equipment as well as losses through fraud and theft and bookkeeping losses. The 2002–03 figure of £4,052 included the write off of a sum of £3.6 million of accrued income relating to Immigration and Nationality Directorate Detention Cost Recovery.

National Offender Management Service

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice has been given to Chief Officers of Probation on the future structure of the probation service after the introduction of the National Offender Management Service. [208684]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has been engaged in ongoing discussions with Chief Probation Officers on the proposals for the National Offender Management Service since the publication of the Carter Report in January 2004. Following consultation, it was announced on 20 July 2004 that the 42 Probation Boards were to be retained as an interim step and this was the subject of a special National Probation Service Leadership Forum on 20 July 2004, to which all Chief Officers and Chairs of Probation Boards were invited. Martin Narey, Chief Executive Officer of National Offender Management Service, spoke at the most recent Leadership Forum, (18–19 November) on the appointment of the 10 Regional Offender Managers and the implications of separating offender management from community interventions. This was also the subject of a recent letter from the Director General of the National Probation Service and the National Offender Manager to Chief Officers. There are a series of events planned over the coming months on the emerging structure of National Offender Management Service.

PRIME MINISTER

Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08; [211685]

(2) what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211686]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Minister for the Cabinet Office to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

CABINET OFFICE

Precedent Book

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Precedent Book. [213591]

Mr. Miliband: The Department's Precedent Book contains internal advice and is therefore not for publication.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W, on special advisers, if he will list the complaints made to the Secretary of the Cabinet between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 regarding the conduct of special advisers. [211340]

Mr. Miliband: Complaints relating to the conduct of all civil servants, including special advisers, are handled confidentially.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Anti-bribery/Corruption Procedures

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will place in the Library the comparison of the Export Credits Guarantee Department revised anti-bribery and corruption procedures with G7 counterparts. [202945]

Mr. Alexander: ECGD is among the leading Export Credit Agencies in the world with regard to its position on bribery and corruption.

ECGD's counterparts agreed to provide details of their anti-bribery and corruption procedures to ECGD in confidence on the understanding that the information would not be made public.

Arms Sales

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much agent's commission the Export Credits Guarantee Department covered on the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia; and what percentage of the contract the commission represented. [206131]

Mr. Alexander: Details of contractual arrangements (including agent's commission) are commercial in confidence.

DEFENCE

Annington Homes

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the payments under the Profit Share Agreement with Annington Homes Ltd. were invoked for *(a)* Gunwharf, Portsmouth, *(b)* Royal Clarence Yard, Gosport, *(c)* Peninsular Barracks, Winchester and *(d)* Ashford Barracks, Kent; and whether the Agreement has ever been invoked more than once on the same site. [213321]

Mr. Caplin: None of the sites listed in the question were included in the 1996 sale of Service Families Accommodation to Annington Homes Ltd. They were disposed of through normal open market procedures. Consequently they did not attract payments under the Profit Share Agreement.

A sale of married quarters in Winchester (close to Peninsular Barracks) was included in the sale and may have attracted payments under the Profit Share Agreement. Details are not immediately available, but I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Army Prosecuting Authority

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reasons the Army Prosecuting Authority was not involved in the case of a private in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders who was convicted of causing death by dangerous driving in Northern Ireland in November 2003, whose name has been communicated to him; [212044]

(2) for what reasons the Commanding Officer of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders based at Palace Barracks, Holywood between 2002 and 2003 did not refer the case of the private in his regiment who was later convicted of causing death by dangerous driving to the Army Prosecuting Authority. [212048]

Mr. Caplin *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The Army Prosecuting Authority only deal with cases that are referred to them by the Army's Chain of Command. If the UK civil authorities are dealing with a case, then the Army Chain of Command will not normally seek to intervene. Queens Regulation 7.007b, which refers to dangerous driving as involving a risk to the general public, points to such a case being dealt with by the civil authorities.

In terms of jurisdiction, Section 70 of the Army Act 1955 applies the range of criminal offences to all personnel subject to military law, rendering a soldier liable for trial by court-martial for an offence contrary to English criminal law. Exceptions to this apply to a number of serious offences, which if they are alleged to have been committed in the UK must be tried by the civil authorities. Other offences alleged to have been committed in the UK may alternatively be tried by the civil authorities.

Army Recruitment

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the monthly recruitment figures for the regular Army were during 2004. [211253]

Mr. Caplin: Figures for "intake from civilian life" are published monthly in Tri-Service Publication 1 (TSP1), a copy of which is in the Library of the House. TSP1 provides updated annual figures on a monthly basis. The following table gives individual monthly intakes for the 12 months up to 1 December 2004. This is the latest data available.

	Number
December 2003	500
January 2004	2,100
February 2004	1,130
March 2004	1,030
April 2004	800
May 2004	960
June 2004	620
July 2004	580
August 2004	990
September 2004	2,050
October 2004	740
November 2004	1,080

Figures show all Officer and Soldier intake to the United Kingdom Regular Forces including re-enlistments and rejoined reservists.

All data have been rounded to the nearest 10. Numbers ending in "5" have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.

British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last reviewed the evidence relating to the compensation claims of the British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association. [210689]

Mr. Caplin: A formal Letter of Claim was received on 16 December 2004 from solicitors representing individual veterans of the British nuclear test programme in a potential compensation claim against the Ministry of Defence. An acknowledgement has been sent. A substantive response is now under consideration.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, dated 7 December 2004 with regard to *(a)* Mr. M. Thompson and *(b)* Mr. J. Laycock; [209861]

(2) when he intends to answer the letter dated 7 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. J. Laycock; [210841]

(3) when he will reply to the letter dated 7 December from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. M Thompson; [212284]

(4) when he will reply to the letter dated 7 December from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. J Laycock. [212285]

Mr. Hoon: I sent replies to my right hon. Friend on 27 January 2005.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the figures were in each case in January 2004; what the personnel costs of the agency are in 2004–05; and what they were in 2003–04. [212153]

Mr. Caplin: The number of people working for the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency and the number are employed in Scotland is published in United Kingdom Defence Statistics 2004, Table 2.6 and Table 2.36 which is available in the Library of the House.

The overall personnel numbers and costs of the agency are published in AFPAA's Annual Report and Accounts. The 2004–05 edition is being prepared and will be available in the Library of the House before the summer recess.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 the MOD Police spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget; and if he will make a statement. [212155]

Mr. Caplin: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Financial year	*Spend for Scotland*	*Percentage of budget*
2002–03	32.273	22
2003–04	33.427	23

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much and what percentage of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2002–03 the Defence Estates Agency spent in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [213083]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Estates Agency incurred expenditure in Scotland on personnel costs as follows:

(a) 2003–04: £2.332 million representing 4.5 per cent. of the Defence Estates Agency personnel budget;

(b) 2002–03: £4.866 million representing 8.2 per cent. of the Defence Estates Agency personnel budget.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the 215 unidentified smaller commitments referred to in the letter dated 17 November from the Minister for the Armed Forces to the hon. Member for Mid Norfolk are for amounts *(a)* over £1 million but up to and including £50 million and *(b)* over £50 million but less than £100 million; and what the estimated aggregate commitment is in each of these two categories. [206601]

Mr. Ingram: There were *(a)* 127 items between £1 million and £50 million, with an estimated aggregate commitment of £1.214 billion, and *(b)* eight items between £50 million and £100 million, with an estimated aggregate commitment of £525 million.

First Minister

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on which dates he has held meetings with the First Minister of the Scottish Executive since 1 January; and if he will make a statement. [201075]

Mr. Caplin: Since January 2004, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence has not held any departmental meetings with the First Minister of Scotland.

HMS Sussex

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from the Council for British Archaeology concerning the proposed recovery of HMS Sussex; and if he will make a statement. [210908]

Mr. Caplin: The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) set out their concerns in a letter to the Department on 11 October 2002. My hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Dr. Moonie) responded initially on 4 November and then in detail on 18 November 2002. Following a further letter from the CBA on 23 January 2003, officials from all the Government Departments involved in the Sussex Project met with the CBA and other interested bodies on 27 May 2003. CBA wrote again on 2 July 2003 and a reply was sent on 23 July 2003. Further briefing was provided to the CBA on 19 October 2004, following which CBA submitted a number of questions in a letter to the Chief Executive of the Disposal Services Agency on 19 November 2004, which were responded to on 26 November 2004.

Infantry Deployment

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many non-infantry soldiers in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Northern Ireland are deployed on infantry tasks. [212099]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently two non-infantry units employed in the infantry role in Iraq: the 4th Regiment Royal Artillery, consisting of 400 personnel, and the Royal Dragoon Guards, consisting of 440 personnel.

There are no non-infantry personnel currently based in Northern Ireland in the infantry role.

Iraq

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many soldiers who have served in Iraq since March 2004 have *(a)* gone absent without leave and *(b)* been charged with desertion. [208385]

Mr. Caplin: Information regarding soldiers who have served in Iraq and who have gone absent without leave is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. There are no incidences of soldiers who have deployed to Iraq since March 2004 having been charged with desertion.

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the objectives of British military policy in Iraq. [213530]

Mr. Ingram: United Kingdom armed forces continue to contribute to the establishment of a stable, free and democratic Iraq though the provision of security, development of Iraq's security forces, and support to the Iraqi Government.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total financial cost to the United Kingdom of its military involvement in Iraq during 2004 was; and if he will make a statement. [213743]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis and audited figures are published each year in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts. Costs for financial year 2003–04 were:

	£ million
Operations in Iraq	1,051
Expenditure on capital equipment	260
Total	1,311

Costs for financial year 2004–05 will be published in the MOD's next Annual Report and Accounts in the autumn.

Naval Munitions

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what health and safety requirements there are for the firing of naval munitions; and whether these requirements prohibit the firing of specific munitions. [206925]

Mr. Ingram: There is a Comprehensive Safety Certification process for all naval munitions and weapon systems which must be completed before they can be used for operations or training. The process renders the risk to equipment and personnel as low as reasonably practical (ALARP), in accordance with statutory Health and Safety requirements. In addition, there is extensive guidance, both general and specific to platforms and to weapon systems, contained in various Royal Navy publications such as BRd1043—Gunnery and Guided Weapon Practices—User Instructions. None of these requirements prohibits the firing of any specific in-service naval munitions.

Panther Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the Panther command liaison vehicle is intended to be from the same family as the Panther armoured reconnaissance vehicle; [211270]

(2) who the lead contractor for the Panther project is; [211269]

(3) how many Panther vehicles have been ordered; and what the cost per unit is; [211267]

(4) what the complement of the Panther vehicle is; [211266]

(5) what the top speed of the Panther vehicle is on *(a)* tarmac roads and *(b)* cross country; [211265]

(6) whether the Panther vehicle is a tracked vehicle; what armaments the Panther vehicle will carry; and what armour specification the Panther vehicle will have. [211264]

Mr. Ingram: The only Panther vehicle the Army is receiving is the Panther command and liaison vehicle. This will be used mainly for a variety of command and liaison roles, and is not primarily a reconnaissance vehicle. It will, however, be used in some formations for tasks such as engineer reconnaissance.

Panther is a wheeled vehicle, and its required top speed is 110 km/h on tarmac roads and 30 km/h cross country. It is being procured in two variants, known as Group 2 and Group 3, and depending on the role it will be crewed by between two and four soldiers. Group 2 variants, which are to be used in higher threat roles, will be armed with a General Purpose Machine Gun mounted in an Overhead Weapon Station with a thermal imager, while Group 3 variants will have no vehicle armament. Panther will have suitable armour for its role, but the specification of the armour is classified.

BAE Systems Land Systems is the lead contractor for the project, and 401 Panther vehicles (326 Group 2 and 75 Group 3) have been ordered, at a basic cost (excluding VAT) of £320,000 each for Group 2 and £240,000 each for Group 3. This does not include the cost of Bowman radios and some other equipment. The overall cost of the programme is £193 million.

Scottish Regiments

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when the Royal Regiment of Scotland will be formed; [212111]

(2) when the Royal Scots and the Kings Own Scottish Borderers will be amalgamated. [212112]

Mr. Ingram: The new infantry structure that my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence announced last year will be implemented by 2008.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors underlay the decision not to assist Swan Hunter with the overrun in budget to build the Largs Bay and Lyme Bay vessels at its Wallsend yard; and if he will make a statement. [199991]

Mr. Ingram *[pursuant to the reply, 10 January 2005, Official Report, c. 81W]:* I regret that a clerical error in the Ministry of Defence led to an answer being laid which had been overtaken by events. I referred to continuing discussions with Swan Hunter, which had in fact concluded. I now wish to correct the record and confirm that a £84 million amendment was made to the contract with Swan Hunter following value for money considerations and to ensure the delivery of the new Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) capability. This decision followed the programme encountering technical difficulties. The revised contract is not a financial support package for Swan Hunter but one that offers the best value for money to the taxpayer in the delivery of these ships.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Staff

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people were employed by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Court Service in each year from 1998–99 to 2003–04; what his estimate is of the number who will be employed by each in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211490]

Mr. Lammy: Data on staffing levels in the civil service are now collected from Departments and agencies annually, in April each year. Headline figures are published under National Statistics guidelines via a press notice. Previously, data were collected twice yearly, in April and October and those for October 2003 were published on 22 April 2004. Data relating to 1 April 2004 were published on 21 October 2004.

A copy of the press notice, accompanying media brief and supporting tables is available at www.civil-service.gov.uk/statistics. Copies of these documents have also been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

More detailed information on the civil service is published annually in "Civil Service Statistics", copies of which are laid in the Libraries of both Houses. The latest edition, based on April 2003 data, was published on 6 August 2004.

Estimates (FTE)	*Department*	*Court Service*[1]
2004–05	2,250	10,910
2005–06[1]	2,150	21,810
2006–07	1,950	20,510
2007–08	1,950	20,310

[1] HMCS WEF 1 April 2005

Magistrates (Northern Ireland)

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to his oral answer of 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 159, whether magistrates are remunerated in Northern Ireland. [212296]

Mr. Leslie: Resident magistrates in Northern Ireland are remunerated at the rate of £90,760 per annum. Justices of the Peace and members of the Lord Chancellor's Lay Panel in Northern Ireland are paid expenses only.

Upon the creation of the new office of Lay Magistrate in Northern Ireland on 1 April 2005, lay magistrates in Northern Ireland will be paid £80 per half day for attending court sittings.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210543]

Mr. Leslie: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the

Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211344]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 27 January 2005]:* The Department for Constitutional Affairs' Welsh Language Scheme has not been finally approved by the Welsh Language Board. The Department is in close consultation with the board with the aim of producing an agreed draft, which will go out for public consultation in the near future.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the key impacts for *(a)* different regions, *(b)* different sectors and *(c)* the world as a whole arising from different predicted levels of climate change. [211755]

Mr. Morley: The Department has followed the approach of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in supporting the use of climate change scenarios to project future impacts at various levels.

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) was set up to facilitate an integrated assessment of the impacts of climate change in the UK through the production of a common set of tools, including climate change scenarios, and through shared expertise. This assessment has progressed through regional and sectoral studies led by stakeholder partnerships. A report summarising the results from UKCIP studies will be published later this year, and copies made available in the Libraries of both Houses. Further information about UK regional and sectoral climate change impacts is available from www.ukcip.org.uk.

From time-to-time, I convene a group of UK experts on climate change to produce an academic review of the impacts of climate change in the UK. The last such review was in 1996, prior to the establishment of the UKCIP.

In terms of impacts for the world as a whole, the Department contributes to the definitive assessments of this type, those developed by the IPCC. Specifically, the Department funds the Technical Support Unit for Working Group II (on climate change impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability), provides support for the UK co-chair of this working group and also funds the Data Distribution Centre that makes the results from the IPCC available to climate researchers.

Other work that has been conducted or supported by the Department in assessing the impacts of climate change is summarised in Defra's Global Atmosphere Division Research Programme Annual Report (the latest publication was for 2002–03), which is available in the Libraries.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department will be promoting the concept of contraction and convergence at the conference on climate change at Hadley Centre for Climate Research and Prediction on 1 to 3 February. [211753]

Mr. Morley: The aim of the conference is to advance scientific understanding of and encourage an international scientific debate on the impacts of climate change for different levels of greenhouse gas stabilisation, and the pathways and options to achieve such levels, and to encourage research on these issues. Possible models for emission reduction regimes, such as contraction and convergence, are beyond the remit of the conference.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets for carbon dioxide emission reductions by 2050 her Department will be promoting at the conference on climate change at Hadley Centre for Climate Research and Prediction on 1 to 3 February. [211754]

Mr. Morley: The aim of the conference is to advance scientific understanding of and encourage an international scientific debate on the impacts of climate change for different levels of greenhouse gas stabilisation, and the pathways and options to achieve such levels, and to encourage research on these issues. No targets will be promoted.

Departmental Equipment

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many items of electrical equipment were used by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of each type of item. [205725]

Alun Michael: All those purchasing electrical equipment in the Department are required to have regard to economy and sustainability but it is not possible to provide a breakdown in the form requested for the very wide range of office and specialist equipment used.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many electronic devices are owned by the Department, broken down by type. [207672]

Alun Michael: Electronic devices such as desktop computers, laptops, printers and other IT equipment are no longer owned by the Department. As from 1 October 2004, all of Defra's IT assets were transferred to IBM as part of the IT outsourcing contract (e-nabling Defra).

Details of other electronic office equipment such as fax machines and photocopiers, which are normally leased, are not held centrally.

There are approximately 2,800 mobile telephones owned by the Department. This figure includes core Defra, RDS and SVS.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent by her Department on *(a)* new furniture and *(b)* hired furniture in each year since 1997. [205605]

Alun Michael: Furniture purchases and hirings are not separately identified. However, hired furniture would be a minute fraction of the total number of items.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206478]

Alun Michael: The following table shows the expenditure in fiscal years since the Department was formed in 2001, up to 31 October 2004 in the current year. Further analysis of vehicle hire and subsistence (which includes hotel accommodation) would incur disproportionate cost.

£ million

	Travel	*Vehicle hire*	*Subsistence*	*Total*
2001–02	14.3	8.7	25.7	48.7
2002–03	10.3	1.5	3.9	15.7
2003–04	11.1	0.5	3.8	15.4
2004–05	10.7	0.4	2.4	13.5

Only one occasion of helicopter hire has been traced in 2003–04 at a cost of £1,796. All travel was in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by her Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206648]

Alun Michael: We are able to provide the total expenditure recorded since the Department was formed in 2001 whereas in the precise form of the question the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The expenditure can be broken into two sub-headings;

Foreign Travel including flights and internal travel and

Subsistence including hotel accommodation.

These figures exclude Agency figures which are shown in a separate table as follows:

£000

	Foreign Travel	*Subsistence*	*Total*
2001–02	1,425	363	1,788
2002–03	1,644	797	2,441
2003–04	1,565	659	2,224

All travel was in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Travel by Ministers and the Civil Service Management Code.

The expenditure for related Agencies (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, Central Science Laboratory, Pesticides Safety Directorate, Rural Payments Agency, Veterinary Laboratories Agency and Veterinary Medicines Directorate) in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is as follows:

	Foreign travel including subsistence (£000)
2001–02	972
2002–03	1,085
2003–04	1,283

Emissions Trading Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the implications for greenhouse gas emissions of the absence of an agreed national allocation plan under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme. [211782]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The UK National Allocation Plan (NAP) was submitted to the Commission in April 2004 and was approved on 7 July. The NAP clearly stated that the figure for the total number of allowances to be allocated was provisional pending finalisation of the emissions projections, the review of Climate Change Agreement targets, and the receipt of verified data from installations.

Although we are still awaiting a formal response from the Commission on the proposed amendments to the NAP (submitted 10 November 2004), the EU Emissions Trading Scheme has commenced operation. Under the terms of their greenhouse gas emissions permits which were issued during the course of last year, operators began monitoring their carbon dioxide emissions on 1 January this year. There has been an active market in contracts for future delivery of emissions allowances for some time. UK operators will be able to trade on the "spot" market once allowances have been issued, which is anticipated to be at the end of March. We plan to announce the installation allocations in early February which will provide UK operators with greater certainty about their allocation. The delay in trading will not affect the fact that operators covered by the Scheme will be required to surrender allowances in line with their carbon dioxide emissions for 2005, as the first year of Phase 1 of the Scheme.

Other member states have also found the implementation of the scheme challenging. Denmark is the only country which is currently in a position to spot trade, and a number of other member states expect to be in a position to spot trade by the end of February. Italy, the Czech Republic, Poland and Greece are yet to receive approval of their NAP from the European Commission.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what rate of change for entitlements within the Emissions Trading Scheme her Department is prepared to accept to ensure its climate change targets are met. [211756]

Mr. Morley: The UK National Allocation Plan (NAP) was submitted to the European Commission in April 2004, and was approved in July. The total number of allowances to be allocated was set at 0.7 per cent.

below the projected UK emissions 2005–07. The NAP clearly stated that this figure (total number of allowances) was provisional and based on interim projections.

Following the finalisation of energy projections, UK emissions 2005–07 are now estimated to be 56 million tonnes CO_2 higher than was estimated in April. The Government have proposed to increase the total number of allowances, but just by 20 million tonnes CO_2. The effect of this is to increase the level of effort required from our NAP to 5 per cent. below projected emissions, making the UK NAP a more ambitious plan.

The EU Emissions Trading Scheme is one of the measures in place to help us achieve our national goal of a 20 per cent. reduction in CO_2 on 1990 levels by 2010. We hope to use the Climate Change Programme review to determine the number of allowances to be issued to UK installations in Phase 2 of the Scheme (2008–12).

Flooding

Roger Casale: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what visits her officials have made since 1997 to *(a)* Germany, *(b)* the Netherlands and *(c)* other EU member states to investigate measures taken to prevent pollution from oil leakage in areas liable to flooding. [211423]

Mr. Morley: Defra officials aim to maintain close links with counterparts in Germany, Netherlands and other EU countries on general flood risk management related issues, but are not aware of any meetings attended where oil leakage was a specific topic for discussion.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the co-ordination of contingency planning in the event of major floods. [211860

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* We have increased flood defence and coast erosion funding to the Environment Agency and other operating authorities up from £312 million in 1997–98 and set to rise to £570 million next year and for each of the following two years. However, although building and maintaining physical defences will reduce the risk of flooding, that risk can never be completely eliminated. Plans exist at local, regional and central levels to respond to potential and actual flood events.

In addition to building and maintaining defences, the Environment Agency maintains its own local, regional and national level contingency plans to deal with potential or actual flooding. As part of its remit, the Agency also maintains a flood warning system to ensure as high a level of preparedness as possible by the public and the local, regional and central responders.

At the national level, Defra has the lead Department role for flood emergencies and our Lead Department Plan sets out the co-ordination arrangements at local, regional and central levels for flooding from rivers or the sea. Alongside this Plan other Departments and Agencies maintain their own plans in their areas of responsibility to respond to, for example, the consequences of floods. There are also provisions for Government co-ordination when necessary through the arrangements operated by the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 formalises a number of duties on local authorities, the emergency services and other organisations involved, including the Environment agency, in responding to any emergency. Among these are contingency planning and risk assessment for emergencies at the local level, including flooding: for example, local flood response plans were activated in the case of both the Boscastle flood in August last year and the January 2005 Carlisle flood.

The Government have also set up a Regional Resilience Team in each of the English regions to enhance the co-ordination of planning for wide impact events, such as major flooding, and to improve lines of communication between central Government and local responders during the response to an incident. These arrangements worked successfully in relation to the Boscastle and Carlisle floods.

The Environment Agency, with other responders, also carries out a regular programme of exercises to test its capability at all levels. Last year, EA led a national level exercise—Exercise Triton—to test the preparedness of organisations at all levels, local, regional and national to a simulated national scale event involving flooding of the East Coast from Lincolnshire to Hampshire, with offsets in Gwent and North Wales. A lessons identified report will be published in the spring.

GM Crops

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what response she has made to the recent Royal Society report on GM crops based on the management of GM herbicide tolerant sugar beet. [211602]

Mr. Morley: A paper reporting the results of studies carried out by scientists at Rothamsted Research Broom's Barn entitled "Management of genetically modified herbicide-tolerant sugar beet for spring and autumn environmental benefit" was published on 19 January 2005 in the Proceedings of the Royal Society.

We have referred this research paper to the Advisory Committee on Releases to the Environment and have asked them in particular to consider the implications, if any, for their advice issued on 13 January 2004 on the implications of the farm scale evaluations of herbicide tolerant GM crops.

Currently GM sugar beet is not authorised for cultivation in the European Union.

Household Waste Recycling

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of household waste in West Derbyshire has been recycled in each of the last three years. [211909]

Mr. Morley: The parliamentary constituency of West Derbyshire is covered by Derbyshire Dales district council.

The proportion of household waste sent for recycling or composting in Derbyshire Dales district council in each of the last three years is presented in the following table:

Household waste sent for recycling or composting in Derbyshire Dales

	Percentage
2000–01	12
2001–01	12
2002–03	16

Source:

Defra's Municipal Waste Management Survey (MWMS)

Oil Leakage

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has sponsored into the effects of oil leakage on land on *(a)* sources of drinking water, *(b)* soil conditions and *(c)* welfare of wildlife. [209501]

Mr. Morley: Defra has not sponsored any research directly in these areas. However, the Environment Agency, a Defra-sponsored non-departmental public body, has undertaken a number of research projects that have considered the impact and attenuation of oil spills on soil and groundwater. In particular:

The Natural Attenuation of Petroleum Hydrocarbons and Chlorinated Solvents in Groundwater, report P 305 dated 1999

Guidance on the assessment and monitoring of natural attenuation of contaminants in groundwater, report number 95, dated 2000.

These reports are available from the Environment Agency via the following internet links:

http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SPRP2-134-01-e-p.pdf

http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/SR-DPUB95-e-e.pdf

Petrol Stations

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what action her Department takes against site operators not carrying out a risk assessment at a petrol station as required by her Department's code; [211529]

(2) what action her Department takes against site operators declining or omitting to carry out a risk assessment at a petrol station as required by the DSEAR code; and if she will make a statement. [211530]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has powers under the Groundwater Regulations 1998 to serve a notice to prohibit, or make subject to conditions, activities, such as operating a petrol station, which might put groundwater at risk. Failure to follow the Groundwater Protection Code, including the provisions on risk assessments, is not an offence in itself but shall be considered, along with individual site circumstances, by the Agency when deciding whether to serve a notice. The Agency will often, particularly where it perceives risks to be low, seek to address issues through dialogue before using these notice powers.

The Dangerous Substances and Explosive Atmospheres Regulations 2002 (DSEAR) are the responsibility of the Health and Safety Executive. Enforcement of DSEAR at petrol filling stations is undertaken by the local Petroleum Licensing Authority (PLA). Regulation 5(1) requires that where a dangerous substance is present at the workplace, the employer should make a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks. Should the PLA discover that such a risk assessment has not been undertaken, then the full range of regulatory action is available to the enforcing officer, ranging from a verbal request to undertake a risk assessment to, ultimately, prosecution.

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the people working within her Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208627]

Alun Michael: The following annex details the secondees from the private sector currently working in this Department, the organisation they came from and the policy responsibilities they have been given.

The term "secondee" refers to a person "borrowed" from an organisation outside the civil service for a period of between three months and three years (exceptionally five years), without affecting employment status. During the secondment period the secondee remains an employee of the parent organisation but is expected to abide by the Defra Staff Handbook and the Official Secrets Act. Secondees are expected to undertake the full range of duties attached to the post. At the end of the secondment the secondee normally returns to the parent organisation.

Name	*Parent organisation*	*Defra unit/division*	*Policy responsibilities*
Sarah Perry	FUTERRA Sustainability Communications Ltd.	Sustainable Development	Building Sustainable Development Capacity
Fay Blair	Global to Local	Sustainable Development	None
Sue Nowak	Water UK	Better Regulation	Implementing the 54 recommendations from Defra's Regulation Task Force report
Richard Chalk	Royal Bank Of Scotland Group	Improvement and Delivery Group—Corporate Development Team	None
Nick Starkey	National Farmers Union	OFIC Crops for Industry	Development of sustainable non food uses of crops other than energy
Alison Pridmore	Capita Symonds	Sustainable Development	None

Name	*Parent organisation*	*Defra unit/division*	*Policy responsibilities*
Bill Senior	BP	GAS	Climate Change activity
John Enright	London Remade	WS Waste Implementation Programme	None
Steven Marshall	Scottish Power	Sustainable Energy—SEP3 International	Energy Efficiency Innovation Review and REEEP Initiative
Paul Turner	Northumbrian Water	Water Supply and Regulation	None
Kate Hampton	Climate Change Capital	Global Atmosphere	Future International action to prevent climate change
Phil Cutts	SERCO Group plc	Rural Development Service	None
Nader Bahri	Powergen	Sustainable Energy	Combined Heat and Power

Shooting

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the groups *(a)* supportive of shooting, *(b)* critical of shooting and *(c)* neutral on shooting interviewed by her Department's consultants working on the review of game laws and licences. [211766]

Alun Michael: A consultant has been engaged by Defra to undertake a preliminary review of the game licensing system with the specific aim of gathering information to help inform any public consultation. To date, the groups that have been contacted include:

Animal Aid
Association of Local Government
British Association for Shooting and Conservation
British Retail Consortium
Country Land and Business Association
Countryside Agency
The Deer Initiative
English Nature
Federation of Small Businesses
Food Standards Agency
Forestry Commission
Game Conservancy Trust
Joint Nature Conservancy Council
Marks and Spencer
National Farmers Union
National Game Dealers Association
National Trust
Police
Post Office
Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Trading Standards Institute

Two consultants who undertake work for a number of different game organisations were also interviewed. The key organisations whose views they put forward were:

British Shooting Sports Council
National Gamekeepers Organisation
Game Farmers Association

The groups were not asked whether they would characterise themselves crudely as "for" or "against" shooting. Our purpose in consulting them is to ensure that a range of expertise, experience and views are taken into account as we consider how to review and update the game licensing provisions.

There will be a public consultation on proposed changes to the system later this year.

Staff Vacancies

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on advertising staff vacancies in *(a)* 2002 and *(b)* 2003. [209583]

Alun Michael: During the period in question, the Department had no central record of recruitment advertising so the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Defra is centralising its Human Resources Services function and introducing a new integrated IT system. This will enable the Department to provide aggregated information in future years.

Tidal Waves

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been carried out into the likelihood of the UK being struck by a tidal wave in the foreseeable future. [211886]

Mr. Morley: We are aware of some research that has been carried out by The British Geological Survey and others, including specific work at the Benfield Hazard Research Centre at University College, London into the possibility of tsunami-type events originating in the Canary Islands. Most assessments have suggested that such events have a very low probability but they clearly cannot be completely ruled out.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what preparations her Department has made for the possibility of the UK being struck by a tidal wave. [211887]

Mr. Morley: Contingency plans at the local, regional and national levels for flooding from rivers or the sea and caused by tide and weather events are already in place. In the light of recent events, and subject to current investigations being led by the Office of Science and Technology, we plan to commission a short-term expert overview of the chances of a tsunami-type event affecting coastal areas of the UK. This will provide information on the likelihood of such events impacting on the UK, possible consequences and the potential for effective preparation and warning.

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of *(a)* which areas of the UK are likely to be affected and *(b)* the scale of likely damage which would be caused by a tidal wave. [211888]

Mr. Morley: The precise scale of likely damage which could be caused by a tsunami type wave is difficult to predict as this would depend on both size and origin. However, the flood maps published on the internet by the Environment Agency now show the potential extent of an extreme flood (estimated at a 0.1 per cent. or 1 in 1,000 annual probability) for all coastal areas of England. While this was never intended to cover tsunami-type events, these maps are clearly indicative of the areas most at risk in such an occurrence. Assessments of such risks for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are matters for the devolved Administrations. However, the Environment Agency Flood maps also cover Wales.

UN Resolutions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the UK *(a)* independently and *(b)* as part of the EU (i) proposed and (ii) co-sponsored UN resolutions (A) A/RES/52/702, (B) A/RES/53/189 A and B, (C) A/RES/54/224, (D) A/RES/55/202, (E) A/RES/56/198, (F) A/RES/57/262, (G) A/RES/58/213 A and B, (H) A/RES/52/201, (I) A/RES/53/190, (J) A/RES/54/221, (K) A/RES/55/201, (L) A/RES/56/197, (M) A/RES/57/260, (N) A/RES/58/212, (O) A/RES/52/199, (P) A/RES/52/198, (Q) A/RES/53/191, (R) A/RES/54/223, (S) A/RES/55/204, (T) A/RES/56/196, (U) A/RES/57/259, (V) A/RES/58/242, *(w)* A/RES/58/211, (X) A/RES/52/29, (Y) A/RES/53/33, (Z) A/RES/55/8 and (AA) A/RES/57/142 for the consideration of the UN General Assembly; and if she will make a statement on the UK's involvement with each of these resolutions; [208132]

(2) whether the UK *(a)* independently and *(b)* as party of the EU (i) proposed and (ii) co-sponsored UN resolutions (A) A/RES/56/200, (B) A/RES/58/210, (C) A/RES/57/258, (D) A/RES/57/254, (E) A/RES/58/219, (F) A/RES/58/217 and (G) A/RES/58/216 for the consideration of the UN General Assembly; and if she will make a statement on the UK's involvement with each resolution; [208196]

(3) whether the UK *(a)* independently and *(b)* as part of the EU (i) proposed and (ii) co-sponsored UN resolutions (A) A/RES/54/217, (B) A/RES/54/216, (C) A/RES/55/200, (D) A/RES/56/193, (E) A/RES/57/251, (F) A/RES/58/209, (G) A/RES/54/214, (H) A/RES/55/196, (I) A/RES/56/192, (J) A/RES/57/252, (K) A/RES/56/226, (L) A/RES/57/253 and (M) A/RES/58/218 for the consideration of the UN General Assembly; and if she will make a statement on the UK's involvement with each of these resolutions; [208197]

(4) whether the UK *(a)* independently and *(b)* as part of the EU (i) proposed and (ii) co-sponsored UN resolutions (A) A/RES/52/28, (B) A/RES/57/143, (C) A/RES/59/25, (D) A/RES/53/77C, (E) A/RES/54/54C, (F) A/RES/53/7, (G) A/RES/54/215, (H) A/RES/55/205, (I) A/RES/54/225, (J) A/RES/55/203, (K) A/RES/57/261, (L) A/RES/54/222, (M) A/RES/56/119, (N) A/RES/57/257 and (O) A/RES/58/243 for the consideration of the UN General Assembly; and if she will make a statement on the UK's involvement with each of these resolutions. [208198]

Mr. MacShane: I have been asked to reply.

These UN resolutions relate to a variety of sustainable development and environmental issues considered by the UN General Assembly over the course of the last eight years. The majority are Second Committee resolutions (relating to economic and sustainable development matters), which are traditionally proposed by the Group of 77 countries. With the exception of resolution A/RES/55/8—on which a vote was called (the UK/EU voted in favour)—all of the resolutions were adopted by consensus. So the UK supported the adoption of all of the resolutions referred to in the list.

Co-sponsorship usually reflects a degree of approval beyond mere acceptance of a consensus (the EU often, but not always, co-ordinates on which resolutions merit co-sponsorship by member states, even though co-sponsorship is recorded individually). We do not hold centrally information on those resolutions the UK/EU has co-sponsored or proposed. However, co-sponsorship details can be accessed publicly through the UN documentation centre at www.un.org.documents. Details of the individual countries or groups that proposed, or "introduced", a resolution can also be obtained from this source.

Water Companies (Insurance Policies)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the effects of the practice of water companies of selling insurance to householders relating to the replacement of water main pipes, with particular reference to leakage. [211764]

Mr. Morley: The Office of Water Services have not directly assessed the impact of household insurance on supply pipe leakage. However, they have reported that leakage from householders' supply pipes accounted for about 28 per cent. of total water company leakage in 2003–04. The numbers of repairs and replacements of householders' supply pipes and the proportion of leakage attributed to households' supply pipes have been at similar levels over the last five years.

A total of 52,907 repairs and 6,472 replacements of household supply pipes were undertaken in 2003–04. Some 91 per cent. of repairs and 46 per cent. of replacements of household supply pipes were carried out by water companies free of charge. Where charges are made, these may be covered by household insurance policies such as those promoted by some water companies.

Pollution Incidents

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many incidents of pollution in the domestic and residential sector there were in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [211042]

(2) how many water pollution incidents in the domestic and residential sector there were in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [211349]

Mr. Morley *[holding answers 31 January 2005 and 1 February 2005]:* The number of incidents reported to the Environment Agency under this heading was 2,392 in 2003 and 1,865 in 2004.

TRANSPORT

Bromsgrove Station

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Health and Safety Executive about selective door opening at Bromsgrove station. [212076]

Mr. McNulty: None. The Health and Safety Executive advises that rolling stock fitted with selective door opening is permitted to stop at stations with short platforms, provided the train operator sets out how the risks associated with selective door opening usage will be managed.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Network Rail about the lengthening of Bromsgrove station platforms. [212077]

Mr. McNulty: None.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211617]

Charlotte Atkins: The following contracts were awarded to Fujitsu during the last two years by the central department, using an Office of Government Commerce pre-competed framework contract:

Service	*Date*	*£*
Data preparation	May 2002 to March 2005	12,000
System support	April 2003 to March 2004	118,805
System support	February to June 2004	59,892
Technical support	June 2004 to March 2005	63,234

The following contracts were awarded to EDS during the last two years by DVLA following competition:

IT consultancy services	*£*
May to August 2004	37,800
May to June 2004	10,500

DVLA have also entered into a 10-year partnering contract with International Business Machines (IBM) on 12 September 2002. Under the terms of this contract IBM sub-contracts the ongoing provision of certain computer services for DVLA to Fujitsu.

Fujitsu has retained and extended—for six months until June 2005—a subcontract with EDS to manage certain of the DVLA's communication links with other organisations, until they can be replaced by newer technology.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many overseas trips, and at what total cost, have been made by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the costs of *(a)* flights, *(b)* internal travel, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence were of each trip. [206655]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport came into existence on 29 May 2002 following machinery of Government changes. The number of overseas trips made by the central Department in 2003–04 was £3,226, and for April–November 2004 was £1,883. The travel costs for 2003–04 were £1,245,285, and for 2004 were £746,303.

Hotel costs were £30,868, and £18,891 respectively, and subsistence and other claimed costs were £453,419.15, and £331,009.64. Information for earlier years, and for any travel booked other than through the Department's central travel contract, can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Total overseas travel and subsistence costs for the Department's Agencies (excluding Highways Agency) were £1,274,317 in 2003–04, and £1,191,088. A more detailed breakdown can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies (Edinburgh, North and Leith)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency, the effects on Edinburgh, North and Leith of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211576]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

Responsibility for a number of transport functions in Scotland has been devolved to the Scottish Executive, including the Scottish road network, bus policy, air transport, lifeline ferry services and harbour improvements.

Finally, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since it was established. [211319]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road casualties in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–07 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants-nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

Responsibility for a number of transport functions has been devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. For example, it is the Assembly that provides funding to local authorities in Wales in support of their local transport plans. Funds from the Strategic Rail Authority have supported improved passenger facilities and integration at Harverfordwest station in Pembrokeshire.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past twenty years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Driving Tests

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many individuals *(a)* failed and *(b)* passed all parts of the driving test in each of the last five years. [211889]

Mr. Jamieson: The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) is unable to supply details of the number of individual candidates to have taken both parts of the driving test during the specified period. Many candidates will have taken either, or both, of the tests on more than one occasion. The following is a summary of the number of test passes and failures in each of the last five years.

	Theory pass	*Theory fail*	*Practical pass*	*Practical fail*
1999–2000	621,267	391,221	495,515	634,390
2000–01	625,827	363,572	496,460	633,375
2001–02	682,781	376,864	525,433	685,699
2002–03	786,171	489,875	581,592	765,024
2003–04	744,607	552,997	598,347	801,038

Footpaths (Devon)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make it his policy not to renew the prohibition on pedestrian traffic on Footpath No. 10, Dartmouth to Castle Cove; and if he will instruct Devon county council to carry out the necessary works to make the footpath safe. [211584]

Charlotte Atkins: Although Footpath No. 10 has been closed for public safety reasons since June 2003, the Secretary of State will not make it his policy not to renew the temporary closure order originally made by Devon county council. If a further renewal request is made, he has a duty to consider it on its merits at the time and will take into account any current and relevant information about the circumstances of the request.

The Secretary of State has no powers issue instructions to Devon CC to carry out the necessary works to make the footpath safe.

M1 (Closure)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason the M1 Motorway was closed between junctions 27 and 28 on 20 January; how long the closure lasted; at what time northbound lanes re-opened; and upon whose authority the closure took place. [211745]

Mr. Jamieson: Approximately 500 m of lanes 1 and 2 of the northbound carriageway of the M1 Motorway just north of junction 27 were closed by the police at about 2120 hours on 20 January as a result of a heavy goods vehicle (HGV) overturning and partially blocking the carriageway. After recovery of the HGV and clearance of debris the northbound carriageway was fully re-opened approximately four hours 25 minutes later at 0145 hrs on 21 January. Responsibility for incident management in such circumstances is a matter for the police.

During this period of time the northbound entry slip road at junction 27 was also closed.

Mobile Phones

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of how effective the ban on the use of a hand-held mobile phone while driving has been since its introduction. [213343]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department for Transport carries out regular surveys of mobile phone use by drivers. The most recent survey carried out in September 2004 found that 1.1 per cent. of car drivers were using hand-held mobile phones, a 25 per cent. reduction since the survey in September 2003.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has commissioned into the suitability of the level of the fine awarded for use of a hand-held mobile phone while driving. [213344]

Mr. Jamieson: When the Department consulted on a proposal to introduce new regulations to prohibit the use of a hand-held phone while driving, comments were also invited on the penalty. The majority of responses considered that the offence should be made endorsable. This involves amending the road traffic acts, a proposal in the Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament, making hand-held mobile phone use subject to endorsement of three penalty points, which will automatically raise the fixed penalty fine to £60.

Meantime, using a hand-held mobile phone currently attracts a £30 fixed penalty or a maximum fine of £1,000 (£2,500 for the driver of a goods vehicle, bus or coach), like most other Construction and Use offences.

The Department's consultation document and decision letter of 24 June 2003 were placed in the Library. They are also available on-line at www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n = 10199&l = 2.

Parking Spaces

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many car parking spaces are provided for *(a)* those working in and *(b)* visiting his Department. [208940]

Charlotte Atkins: Approximately 10,150 spaces are available across the DfT estate of 1680 properties across the country, a number of which are located remotely from centres of public transport. Also a number of these locations have transport functions that require car parking spaces e.g. Driving Standards Agency, Vehicle and Operator Services Agency.

Rail Freight

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 958W, on railways, what assessment he has made of the priorities for the expansion of rail freight in the next five years *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* in the South East; what account will be taken when decisions are made on supporting such expansion of (i) corridors of need for rail freight services, with particular reference to ports and (ii) the need for transportation of particular products, with particular reference to (A) oil and (B) waste; and when he expects to make an announcement regarding his policy on rail freight. [211478]

Mr. McNulty: Rail freight is a private sector industry and the expansion of the industry should be carried forward through the actions of rail freight operators and their customers. However, the Government have clearly set out their support for encouraging growth in rail freight through measures in the White Paper "The Future of Rail".

The Strategic Rail Authority have made ongoing assessments of the demand for freight on the railways, and these market studies were referred to in the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 958W.

Much of the analysis in these studies is route specific, and therefore allow any regional impacts to be identified.

With particular reference to ports, the studies imply that the demand for the movement of goods through deep sea ports is likely to increase. The SRA's analysis has informed the work carried out on the network, evidenced by the recent completion of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton gauge enhancement project.

The information is also used in planning network use through the Route Utilisation Strategy and Regional Planning Assessment processes, ensuring that provision is made for the needs of the freight industry.

These needs are assessed on a commodity-by-commodity basis, and any need in the network capacity to meet growth in oil and waste movement has been taken into account.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to meet the Railfreight Interchange Investment Group. [211485]

Mr. McNulty: It is not the normal practice of the Government to release details of meetings with private individuals or companies. However, Ministers regularly meets a wide range of private companies with rail freight investment interests.

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Government's policy is on large-scale railfreight interchanges. [211486]

Mr. McNulty: In March 2004 the Strategic Rail Authority published the Strategic Rail Freight Interchange Policy. The document is on the internet at the following address: http://www.sra.gov.uk/publications/strategy/freightinterchange/interchange policy and will be made available in the Library of the House.

Rail Services

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the timetable for the distribution of services provided by Central Trains between other train operating companies; [212070]

(2) whether through-rail services between Droitwich Spa and Malvern will be maintained following the distribution of the Central Trains franchise between other train operating companies. [212072]

Mr. McNulty: Work is in hand to analyse options and then to determine the exact nature and timing of the redistribution of Central Trains' services. This is primarily a matter of redistribution of services among other franchises and so through services between Droitwich Spa and Malvern are currently expected to continue to be provided.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve the quality and reliability of information to passengers *(a)* on trains, travelling between and *(b)* at stations in Birmingham and Worcestershire. [212071]

Mr. McNulty: Real time information screens are to be provided at Ledbury, Colwall, Great Malvern, Malvern Link, Worcester Foregate Street, Worcester Shrub Hill, Bromsgrove, Kidderminster and Stourbridge. The works should be completed by November 2005. All conductors on Central Trains have been issued with mobile phones in order to provide a means of communicating train-running information and alternative service arrangements during times of disruption.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that expansion of powers to passenger transport executives does not have an adverse impact on train services in surrounding shire county areas. [212073]

Mr. McNulty: The "Future of Rail" White Paper and the Railways Bill will give the Passenger Transport Executives (PTEs) greater flexibility to make trade-offs between heavy rail and other modes. Our aim is that the choices that the PTEs make under the new framework should not have an adverse impact on the train services in surrounding local authority areas.

Although the PTEs will be able to propose reductions to rail services in their areas and retain the savings, this will only apply to any services wholly within their Metropolitan areas and those outside which are wholly funded by the PTE. Similarly, although PTEs will be able to fund additional services themselves, they will only be able to introduce them where they do not significantly adversely impact on the wider objectives for the rail network in that area.

Following enactment of the Railways Bill, PTEs will be able to propose closures of rail services, networks and stations. However, they will only be able to propose closures that fall wholly within their Metropolitan boundary or that they wholly fund themselves.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of line speed restrictions in Worcestershire on the punctuality and reliability of local train services. [212074]

Mr. McNulty: Speed restrictions are applied by Network Rail to ensure the safe operation of services. I understand from Central Trains that current speed restrictions in the Worcestershire area can result in some journey times being extended by one or two minutes, which can have a detrimental knock-on effect on performance. It is for Network Rail to determine in consultation with train operators how best to deal with these operational matters.

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what plans there are *(a)* to renew signalling in the Worcestershire area and *(b)* to introduce a new signalling section between Worcester and Droitwich Spa; [212078]

(2) what plans there are to remodel track layouts between Worcester Shrub Hill and Worcester Foregate Street Stations. [212079]

Mr. McNulty: These are operational matters for Network Rail. Network Rail will respond directly to the hon. Member.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have travelled *(a)* to and *(b)* from Stoke-on-Trent railway station in each of the last seven years. [213065]

Mr. McNulty: The information in the following table is based on ticket sales and provides the total journeys made to and from Stoke-on-Trent for each of the last seven years.

	From Stoke-on-Trent	*To Stoke-on-Trent*
1997–98	614,365	613,341
1998–99	623,476	624,098
1999–2000	630,931	629,616
2000–01	569,732	571,336
2001–02	564,228	564,509
2002–03	556,823	560,766
2003–04	476,415	476,854

Railway Stations (Disabled Access)

Mr. Norman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much is available in the Access for All fund to improve disabled access at railway stations; and what criteria are used for distribution of grants from the fund; [211900]

(2) what the passenger footfall is of each railway station prioritised or considered under the Access For All fund; and how much funding has been allocated from the fund to each station. [211956]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority intends to publish a consultation document on its Accessibility Strategy shortly. The document will deal with the prioritisation and funding of work at stations to improve accessibility. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

Road Accidents

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the length of time a driver has had a licence is recorded at motorway accidents. [211884]

Mr. Jamieson: Road collision reports compiled by the police do not include this information. However, the Department has carried out research on novice driver accidents. This indicates that, although young novice drivers are more at risk than other drivers in all or most situations, motorways do not present them with a disproportionately higher risk than other road types.

Rural Transport

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what initiatives his Department has introduced since 2001 to support transport provision in rural areas. [213108]

Charlotte Atkins: In the period covered by the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05 we have made available a total of £221 million in Rural Bus Subsidy Grant to help local authorities to support new and enhanced rural bus services. In the same period awards totalling £81 million have been made to local authorities for projects submitted under the Rural Bus Challenge scheme.

A number of other initiatives have been of particular relevance to transport provision in rural areas. In 2002 we extended eligibility to Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG) to a wide range of community transport operations. Some 700 community transport groups are now claiming the grant, many of them in rural areas. Last year we introduced changes to regulations making it easier to provide flexible and demand responsive bus services and making these services eligible for BSOG. We have also issued guidance to authorities on the introduction of accessibility planning which provides a framework for improving accessibility in rural areas and elsewhere.

Transport for London

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and Transport for London on the definition of rail services in London. [213332]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 1 February 2005]*: There is no Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and Transport for London on the definition of rail services in London.

The Railways Bill which is currently under consideration by Parliament, defines a "London railway passenger service" as

> (a) "a service for the carriage of passengers by railway between places in Greater London; or
>
> (b) a service for the carriage of passengers by railway between places in Greater London and places outside Greater London."

In addition, for the purposes of network modification procedures, the Railways Bill defines "excluded London service" as a service that is

> (a) "provided by Transport for London or a subsidiary of Transport for London; or
>
> (b) is designated as a London service for the purposes of this section (25) by an order made by the Secretary of State, or is of a description of services so designated".

The exact role of the Mayor in respect of some or all London railway passenger services has yet to be finalised. Last year's Railways White Paper (The Future of Rail, 15 July 2004, Cm 6233) identified a number of areas where a greater role for the Mayor would be considered. Once that work is complete it is intended to publish a Memorandum of Understanding setting out the Mayor's role. The Future of Rail White Paper also made it clear that there would be full consultation in respect of any Mayoral role beyond the GLA boundary.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211337]

Charlotte Atkins: The former Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions agreed a scheme with the Welsh Language Board that was published on 17 July 2001. Following machinery of Government changes in June 2002, the Department for Transport has continued to operate a Welsh language scheme on this basis. An updated version will be published later this year.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Learning Inspectorate

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure of the Adult Learning Inspectorate was in each year since its establishment; and what the estimated budget for the next financial year is. [211940]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Adult Learning Inspectorate became operational on 1 April 2001. Its expenditure was £17.1 million in 2001–02, £24.5 million in 2002–03, £27.8 million in 2003–04 and estimated expenditure for 2004–05 is likely to be £27.6 million. The estimated budget for 2005–06 is £28.2 million. The reason for the increase in expenditure between 2001–02 and 2002–03 is because the ALI was building up to full capacity with substantial increases in inspection activity for both DfES and Jobcentre Plus.

Advance Level Qualifications (Examinations)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* research she has commissioned and *(b)* discussions she has had on devising examinations which can identify performance over the full range of grades envisaged for advance level qualifications in the "Tomlinson Report"; and if she will make a statement. [213876]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We will be publishing a White Paper, containing our response to the "Final Report" of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform, led by the former Chief Inspector of Schools, Sir Mike Tomlinson, in the near future.

The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is responsible for developing qualifications and advising Ministers on the mechanisms for grading.

Apprenticeships

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what work is being conducted on integrating apprenticeships into the diploma framework in the Tomlinson Report; and what discussions she has had with employers about this proposal. [213877]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: A White Paper on 14–19 reform will be published shortly. It is envisaged that apprenticeships will continue to form an important part of high quality learning provision for young people and will be fully integrated into any new arrangements. The Secretary of State regularly talks to employers and others on apprenticeships and related matters.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of cared for children who received an official police caution in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212080]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of children looked after for at least 12 months for the years ending September 2000 to 2003 and who were convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year. Information was not collected centrally for the years between 1997 and 1999. The data are only available in this form—it is not possible to separate out the figures for those receiving a final warning of reprimand.

Number at 30 September

England	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Number of children looked after for at least 12 months	42,200	43,400	44,100	44,900
Of these:				
Number of children aged 10 or over at 30 September	25,700	27,000	28,200	29,100
Of these:				
Number convicted or subject to a final warning or reprimand during the year	2,800	2,800	2,700	2,800

Source: DfES

Environmental Education

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value is of her Department's financial support to non-governmental organisations involved in environmental education in 2004–05; what the budget for this purpose in the current year is; and if she will make a statement. [213123]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 1 February 2005]*: As stated in our Sustainable Development Action Plan for Education and Skills, we believe that environmental issues and sustainable development need to be embedded in policies throughout the education system. A number of our funding streams to NGOs include funds for environmental education to support, for example teaching resources, continuing professional development, and some core costs, giving a total of £983,100 in 2004–05.

GCSE Scores

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average GCSE points scores for each school type in England excluding GNVQ Part One qualifications and GCSE short courses have been in each year since 2000. [208430]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the average point score of 15-year-old pupils from 2000 to 2004 by school type based on achievements in GCSEs and Full course GNVQs only:

	2004					
	New points	*Old points*	*2003*	*2002*	*2001*	*2000*
Maintained mainstream schools						
Comprehensive	311.9	38.3	38.0	37.5	37.0	36.9
Selective	473.7	62.8	61.7	61.3	60.5	60.1
Secondary modern	279.5	33.5	33.2	32.5	32.1	31.5
Institution type						
Community	300.7	36.7	36.4	36.0	35.6	35.5
Voluntary aided	354.9	44.3	43.7	43.0	42.1	41.9
Voluntary controlled	331.8	41.5	41.6	41.1	41.1	41.1
Foundation	341.7	42.6	42.4	42.0	41.5	41.1
Academies	230.9	26.8	22.8	—	—	—
CTC	444.0	56.6	56.3	55.2	51.2	48.8
Community special	17.9	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.7	1.6
Foundation special	17.3	1.8	1.5	1.9	1.8	1.9
Independent	402.7	53.4	53.7	53.6	53.3	52.7
Non-maintained special school	67.9	8.0	8.1	7.6	8.8	7.7
Independent special school	83.0	9.6	9.0	8.2	8.3	8.6
Hospital schools and PRUs	29.3	3.2	3.1	6.0	5.4	5.0
Total	315.6	39.1	38.9	38.5	38	37.8

Note:
As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15-years at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Please note that for 2004 figures are presented on two bases; a new point scoring system developed to allow inclusion of a wider range of approved qualifications and the previous point scoring system.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she has conducted a study into the impact of the introduction of identity cards on her Department's business. [209623]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has been working closely with the Home Office to identify where the Identity Cards Scheme will provide benefits. This work is ongoing.

Institute of Assessment

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made in setting up the Institute of Assessment; and if she will make a statement. [213875]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: As part of the exams modernisation programme, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority is intending to set up an institute to represent the interests of examiners and improve the quality of assessment in general examinations. QCA has just completed a period of consultation with a range of interested parties and plans are still evolving. QCA hope to launch the institute later this year.

Learning and Skills Council

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ensure that letters from the Learning and Skills Council responding to parliamentary questions, which neither contain confidential information nor are excessive in length, are printed in the *Official Report*; and if she will make a statement. [211580]

Derek Twigg: I can confirm that under guidance issued by the Leader of the House concerning "I will write" replies, when the substantive response has been issued, a copy is sent to *Hansard* for printing in the *Official Report* in the same way as for other written answers.

Salt

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what actions her Department is taking to mark National Salt Awareness Day on 26 January; and if she will make a statement. [211944]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Education and Skills has not taken any action to mark National Salt Awareness Day. The day was targeted at the over 60 age group, recommending that they cut their salt intake to reduce the risk of heart disease and having a stroke. There was no specific activity targeted at school children.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will list the speeches her special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date; [210559]

(2) if she will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210534]

Derek Twigg: No speeches were made by the Department's special advisers during this time. Information on meetings during this time period is not held.

All meetings held by special advisers and all speeches given by Special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much expenditure by his Department in response to the tsunami emergency has been allocated to Ministry of Defence Resources. [213078]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development estimates that up to £2.5 million of marginal costs will be incurred by the Ministry of Defence in supporting the emergency response to the Indian Ocean earthquake tsunami. This includes airlift, the deployment of HMS Chatham and RFA Diligence, two Bell helicopters used in Indonesia, and deployment and support of some specialist staff to Indonesia and the Maldives.

The support of Ministry of Defence personnel and assets has been important in responding to specific needs following the disaster. The co-operation between the Ministry of Defence and the Department for International Development has been excellent.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on aid to victims of the Asian tsunami. [214112]

Hilary Benn: The Department for International Development has committed £75 million towards immediate humanitarian needs. This assistance is being channelled through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement, non-governmental organisations and by DFID direct action. Of this, £40 million has been pledged as the UK contribution to the UN Flash Appeal. As well as this support through the United Nations, DFID continues to make funding allocations to non-government organisations and to provide donations in kind.

DFID will make a significant contribution to the longer-term reconstruction and rehabilitation of the regions devastated by the tsunami. We will follow the lead of the governments concerned in order to ensure that DFID's contribution is part of a properly co-ordinated and effective reconstruction plan and that it meets the needs of the affected governments and those who are in most need of assistance; we are therefore waiting until the governments in question have finalised the needs assessments which they are putting together with the support of the World Bank and others, before planning what assistance we will be offering. DFID will work to ensure that the views of the poorest and most vulnerable are taken into account throughout the process of rehabilitation.

Bangladesh

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 52W, on Bangladesh, what changes to the Chars Livelihood Programme: concept and management in Bangladesh Maxwell Stamp have requested as a result of the recent tsunami. [213107]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There has been no request from Maxwell Stamp to change the Chars Livelihood Programme: concept and management as a result of the recent tsunami.

Carbon Capture

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what projects on carbon capture and storage have been supported by his Department in each year since 1997. [212127]

Hilary Benn: DFID has provided no direct funding for carbon capture and storage projects.

Carbon (dioxide) capture and storage techniques, if they can be developed for use on a large scale, could be one way of reducing the future volume of energy-related carbon emissions to the atmosphere. Such emissions are widely thought to be contributing to global climate change.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has invited the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to prepare a report on carbon storage technologies for consideration by the conference of parties. Over 100 authors are involved in writing the report, which is expected to be finalised later this year (2005). The report is expected to include a summary for policymakers. UK

Government inputs are being provided through the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

Debt Relief

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding has been provided by the Government under the debt initiative recently announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, broken down into *(a)* funding provided before the initiative was announced and *(b)* additional funding planned under the initiative. [213085]

Hilary Benn: Under the new multilateral debt relief initiative, the UK will pay 10 per cent. of the debt service owed to the World Bank and African Development Bank on behalf of eligible countries. The initiative will cover payments from 1 January 2005.

(a) Funding for this initiative was provided for in the most recent Spending Review, for 2005–06 to 2007–08. This initiative is additional to the UK's commitments of £2.3 billion of relief on its debts for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative and $479 million to support debt relief from multilateral institutions through HIPC.

(b) The review provided for an increase in resources allocated to DFID from £3.8 billion this year to £5.3 billion in 2007–08. Part of the additional resources was provided in view of the cost of extending further debt relief under the new initiative.

20 countries are currently eligible for the initiative. The cost to the UK for these countries over the next three years is US$161 million and through to 2015 will be US$ 884 million. As more countries progress through the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, or have Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) programmes approved, the list of eligible countries will expand. If all of the countries that could potentially qualify for this initiative did, the cost to the UK could rise to US$1,921 million through to 2015.

Energy

Mr. Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what level of investment his Department is seeking in *(a)* energy efficiency and *(b)* renewable energy from the World Bank Group. [213299]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: As an outcome of the Extractive Industries Review, the World Bank made a commitment in 2004 to increase its annual lending for renewable energy and energy efficiency by an average of 20 per cent. per year, over the five years, to 2010. This is partly aimed at improving their balance of support between support for fossil fuel and renewable energy projects.

DFID welcomes this decision by the World Bank Group as part of the effort towards improving access to sustainable and affordable energy services in developing countries. Existing investments by the bank in renewable energy and energy efficiency are relatively small. DFID is working with the bank to see if a higher level of such investments can be achieved. This includes our participation at an international forum in March 2005, being hosted by the World Bank, on scaling up renewable energy and energy efficiency in developing countries.

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the UK Government are taking to ensure that civil society organisations in developing countries are able to access allocated resources for meeting the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. [211153]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID fully recognises the key contribution that civil society organisations (CSO) have to play in tackling HIV and AIDS. We are therefore actively working to promote CSO involvement in national AIDS responses. We are, for example, working to find ways to help the flow of resources from national AIDS commissions to NGOs and CSOs. These, including faith-based organisations, have an important role in helping to meet the needs of children affected by AIDS—orphans and vulnerable children—in terms of protection, care and support.

At the Global Partners' Forum on orphans and vulnerable children held in Washington DC in December 2004, I announced how the UK would meet our target of spending at least £150 million over the next three years to meet the needs of orphans and vulnerable children. Most of this will be spent in Africa where the impacts of AIDS on children are most severe. DFID will mainly be providing funds though our country programmes to support national responses. We are however, already providing funds through NGOs to support vulnerable children in Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In a number of countries, such as Kenya and Zimbabwe, we are supporting the rapid assessment analysis and action plan process (RAAAP), which has been led by UNICEF. This has resulted in the development of 16 national action plans for orphans and vulnerable children. Effective civil society involvement in their implementation is an important issue for us and we will be working with UNICEF to ensure that civil society organisations are appropriately included in these programmes.

An additional means of ensuring that civil society organisations are appropriately involved in responding to the needs of children affected by AIDS will be provided as we renew our agreements with key UK NGOs such as HelpAge International and Save the Children to include relevant AIDS-related work as a key objective. Out of the 18 partnership agreements we have with UK-based NGOs, 14 have specific objectives on HIV and AIDS. We will also increase our Civil Society Challenge Fund from £10 million to £14 million in 2005 and encourage proposals from NGOs wanting to provide support in this field.

International Financial Institutions

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is on how International Financial Institutions (IFIs) should conduct consultations; what his policy is on which aspects of the *(a)* Cabinet Office and *(b)* EU codes on conducting consultations should apply to consultations run by IFIs; and if he will make it Government policy to object to consultations run by IFIs if they do not meet these terms. [213215]

Hilary Benn: Both DFID and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) recognise the benefits of consultation. It can improve the design of projects and policies, and increase developing countries' ownership of their own development.

The IFIs have a diverse range of consultation guidelines for different types of policies and projects; DFID believes that this is appropriate. The EU guidelines on consultation also specifically state that

> "the method and extent of the consultation performed must always be proportionate to the impact of the proposal subject to consultation."

DFID does not believe it is appropriate to impose domestic guidelines on a multilateral organisation. Instead, we work with multilateral organisations to encourage them to make their consultations more transparent and comprehensive. In particular, we encourage IFIs to consult widely with affected parties, allowing an appropriate amount of time both for consultation and feedback. DFID also stresses the importance of ensuring that the consultation is tailored to local needs. In the ongoing negotiations of the 14th replenishment of the International Development Association (IDA), the arm of the World Bank which lends to the world's poorest countries, the UK has been pushing for strengthened documentation of stakeholder feedback from consultations required under the World Bank's safeguard policies.

DFID believes that this approach works. For example, we successfully encouraged the Asian Development Bank to carry out extensive internal and external consultations on its Inspection Function. Consultation documents were posted on the Bank's website for comment; public consultation meetings were held with a wide range of people, including those affected by the project; and consultation workshops were held in 10 of the Bank's member countries. The Bank recognised how valuable this consultation process was, and later held extensive consultations on its public information and disclosure policies.

Palestine

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid was received by the Palestinian Authority for *(a)* humanitarian and *(b)* military purposes from (i) the Government of the United Kingdom and (ii) other sources from the United Kingdom in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211762]

Hilary Benn: The information is as follows:

(i) DFID's programme of assistance to the Palestinian Territory includes both developmental and humanitarian aid, to the Palestinian Authority (PA) and through other channels. Assistance to the Palestinian Territory since 1997 is shown in the table. Prior to 2004–05 none of this was provided directly to the PA. In 2004–05 £7 million was provided as direct support to the PA's budget.

Assistance

	Humanitarian and development aid (£000)
1997–98	6,091
1998–99	5,180
1999–2000	7,990
2000–01	8,996
2001–02	14,528
2002–03	15,166
2003–04	16,842

No military aid was given by the UK Government to the PA in the years shown, although the Ministry of Defence has recently posted a military liaison officer to examine future needs. The UK Government also support Palestinians through its share of EC assistance and via the United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

(ii) There are substantial flows from the UK to Palestinians through private and non- governmental organisations. We do not track the exact amounts.

Road Safety

Dr. Moonie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what action his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take in response to UN General Assembly Resolution A/58/L60 on Improving Global Road Safety; and if he will make a statement; [213329]

(2) what action his Department has taken in response to the World Health Organisation and World Bank report on road traffic injury prevention, published in April 2004; and if he will make a statement; [213330]

(3) what funding was provided in *(a)* cash and *(b)* percentage terms for (i) transport-related projects, (ii) road transport-related projects and (iii) road safety-related projects in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [213331]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The joint World Health Organisation (WHO) and World Bank World report on road traffic injury prevention brings much needed attention to the global impact of road accidents on low and middle income countries. DFID welcomes the UN resolution on Improving Road Safety noting the recommendations of the World Report and inviting the WHO to act as co-ordinator on road safety issues.

The Global Road Safety Partnership (GRSP) was established to increase awareness of road safety and promote sustainable reductions in death and injury on roads in developing and transition countries. DFID has supported the GRSP since it was founded in 1999. Our support in recent years has reduced as this partnership between businesses, civil society and Governments has become established drawing in contributions from a growing membership and our support is set to end in March this year. Since 1997, DFID has also supported a number of research projects under the theme "improve transport safety and reduce the impact of accidents particularly for poor people in rural and urban areas".

DFID is currently leading on setting up a new Transport Knowledge Partnership (TKP), which will serve as a means of disseminating knowledge on transport in the developing countries. The TKP will be launched later this month in Manila and is intended to become a common platform for development agencies and governments to share transport related knowledge and lessons, including road safety activities such as GRSP.

DFID has maintained constant support to the transport sectors of developing countries. The funding we have provided has been in the region of £50 million to £60 million year on year since 1997. However as the total bilateral spend has doubled from 1997 to the present, the percentage allocated has fallen from 5.7 per cent. in 1997–98 to 2.1 per cent. in 2003–04. In addition to this project expenditure, DFID contributions to the multilateral donor organisations support the transport sector.

Road transport forms approximately 40 per cent. of the transport portfolio. The following table gives expenditure for road-transport related projects for each year since 1997. The table also shows expenditure on road safety related projects.

DFID bilateral expenditure

£

	Road-transport related projects	*Road-safety related projects*
1997–98	15,853,031	432,844
1998–99	26,798,141	161,312
1999–2000	18,289,936	265,407
2000–01	18,401,680	369,485
2001–02	22,331,636	292,057
2002–03	20,804,834	244,870
2003–04	19,902,211	331,592

Source:
DFID Statistical Reporting and Support Group

This work has involved research, road-safety education in schools and communities, engineering safety measures, and support to the Global Road Safety Partnership. Increasingly we are placing attention on working alongside others to promote road safety policies and practices, such as through the establishment of TKP and regionally through programmes such as the Sub-Sahara Africa Transport Policy Programme, which includes a road safety component. By raising awareness of road safety issues, some developing and transition countries are beginning to put more emphasis on funding road safety through their own budget allocations.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210544]

Hilary Benn: DFID's special advisers attend a number of meetings with external representatives. DFID does not hold a full record of special advisers' meetings. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210563]

Hilary Benn: DFID's special advisers did not made any speeches in an official capacity in the period in question, as in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Tanzania

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will estimate the cost of the new debt initiative announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his recent visit to Tanzania. [213080]

Hilary Benn: The UK's initiative aims to provide full relief on multilateral debt service so that no country committed to poverty reduction has to choose between servicing their debt and funding development. The UK will pay 10 per cent. of the debt service owed to the International Development Association (IDA) and African Development Fund (AfDF) on behalf of eligible countries. All low income countries with a demonstrated commitment to use additional resources provided by debt relief could be eligible. These countries are those that have reached Completion Point under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative, and all other IDA-only (i.e. eligible to borrow only from the most concessional lending arm of the World Bank) Low-Income Countries (LICs) that have a Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) approved by the World Bank. Sri Lanka has also been added in light of the impact of the South East Asia tsunami.

The list of currently eligible countries comprises 15 post-Completion Point HIPCs, four IDA-only LICs with PRSCs, and Sri Lanka. The initiative is effective from the start of 2005 covering debt service through to 2015, when a review will consider further needs. The UK's share of debt service payments for the currently eligible countries over the next three years will be around US $161 million. The cost to the UK for these countries through to 2015 will be US $884 million. This represents the minimum cost to the UK of this initiative.

As more countries progress through the HIPC Initiative, or have PRSCs approved, the list of eligible countries will expand. The cost to the UK through to 2015 for all countries that could potentially qualify would be US $1,921 million. This represents the maximum cost to the UK of this initiative.

Tanzania has formally completed the HIPC process and is therefore currently eligible to benefit from this relief. The UK will pay 10 per cent. of its debt service costs to IDA and the AfDF, which will amount to approximately US$ 14 million over the next three years, and US $74 million through to 2015.

The UK is calling on all developed countries to join us in this initiative to provide full relief on multilateral debt service. For the World Bank and African Development Bank the cost of this full relief through to 2015 for currently eligible countries would be US $8.8 billion and US $19.2 billion for all potentially eligible countries. Full relief on debts owed to the International Monetary Fund could add up to another US $5 billion through to 2015 and the UK is proposing that this be financed by a sale or revaluation of the International Monetary Fund's gold reserves.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211335]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID does not have a Welsh Language Scheme but works in consultation with our colleagues in the Welsh Assembly in order to provide major policy documents in Welsh.

TREASURY

World Poverty Reduction

13. **Anne Picking:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what contribution the UK is making to meeting the 2015 targets for reducing world poverty. [213427]

Mr. Timms: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the aim of all UK development policy. We pursue it by supporting countries' own efforts, including through increasing aid and delivering it better. We are working with G8 and EU governments this year to finance 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief and to secure agreement to the International Finance Facility to provide the resources needed.

Welfare to Work

16. **Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his assessment is of the effectiveness of welfare to work policies. [213430]

Mr. Boateng: This Government's labour market policies—including New Deal and a successful macro-economic framework—have seen 2 million more people in work since 1997, real advances in skills and training, and a tax benefit system that ensures that work pays.

International Finance Facility

18. **Mike Gapes:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in representations to the IMF and World Bank on the international finance facility. [213432]

Mr. Timms: Good progress has been made in promoting the International Finance Facility (IFF) with other governments, international institutions, the business community, NGOs and faith groups. It now has the support of all the European members of the G7—the UK, France, Italy and Germany—as well as Sweden, which recently announced its support, and almost 50 emerging market and developing countries. In their recent reports on the IFF, the World Bank and the IMF have stated that the IFF is "technically feasible" and "the most advanced proposal to frontload aid".

Taxation

20. **Mr. Goodman:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of the level of taxation on the state of the economy. [213434]

Dawn Primarolo: Since 1997 the Government have consistently delivered macroeconomic stability with strong growth and low inflation, thus establishing a track record that has been internationally acknowledged. The Government's approach to taxation balances the need to finance better quality public services, deliver fairness and promote sustainable development and economic activity while at the same time ensuring that the UK benefits from the advantages of being a lightly taxed economy.

Tax Credit Overpayment

22. **Sir Archy Kirkwood:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the current level of tax credit overpayment. [213436]

Dawn Primarolo: Overpayments of tax credits are established after the end of the tax year, when final income and circumstances for the previous year are known and the award can be finalised.

Analysis of the numbers of families with over or underpayments for 2003–04 and the values of these cannot be known until all awards have been finalised. For families who previously provided estimates the deadline for reporting final 2003–04 income was 31 January 2005. All awards can now be finalised. Statistics on over and underpayments will be published in spring 2005 under National Statistics.

Small Shops

23. **Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce the tax burden on small shops. [213437]

Dawn Primarolo: This Government's commitment to small businesses has been clearly demonstrated by our actions—we have:

cut the small companies' corporation tax rates from 23 per cent. to 19 per cent.;

introduced 40 per cent. first year capital allowances for small companies, with an enhanced rate of 50 per cent. for 2004–05;

introduced R and D tax credits with a special payable credit for small companies; and

simplification schemes to make VAT easier.

The integrated HMRC will be working to minimise compliance burdens on small businesses by improving the service they offer.

But every profitable business must pay its fair share of tax.

Government Staffing Levels

24. **Mr. Mackay:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the influence of central Government staffing levels on the level of taxation. [213438]

Mr. Boateng: The Government have delivered sustained increases in public spending in order to deliver significant improvements in public services. As part of this, we expect to see an increase in the size of the front line service delivery work force—in particular for key public services like health and education.

As part of the Government's Efficiency Programme, Departments are implementing reductions in civil service posts, with extra resources being focused on the front line.

The 2004 Spending Review set administration cost limits for Departments which will reduce central Government running costs as a proportion of total spending to a record low.

25. **Angela Watkinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the effect of public spending increases on levels of central Government staffing. [213439]

Mr. Boateng: Government are committed to increased investment in health, education and criminal justice services, allowing for up to 250,000 new staff by 2008 to help deliver these key front line services. At the same time, the Government remain committed to achieving over £20 billion of efficiency savings, as identified by the Gershon Review. In all, this will lead to a gross reduction of 84,000 civil service administrative and support posts across UK Government Departments.

Stolen Assets

Ms Drown: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps his Department is planning to ensure that assets stolen from poor countries, held in bank accounts abroad, are returned. [213435]

Mr. Timms: The Government will continue to play a leading role in promoting high international standards, aimed at increasing financial transparency and accountability worldwide.

These efforts include strong support for robust anti-money laundering standards to help identify and report the proceeds of corruption; technical assistance aimed at building capacity in developing countries to tackle corruption; and domestic measures to identify and recover the proceeds of crime.

Civil Servants

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants have *(a)* been relocated and *(b)* been agreed for relocation in the last 12 month; and to which areas of the United Kingdom, broken down by Department. [213273]

Mr. Boateng: The Chancellor announced progress towards relocation targets in the pre-Budget report in December 2004. Further progress will be announced in Budget 2005. The destination of relocations away from London and the south east is a matter for individual departmental business plans.

Correspondence

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to answer the letter of the hon. Member for Birkenhead, dated 17 January, regarding the tax credits of his constituents, Mr and Mrs Newnes. [213520]

Dawn Primarolo: I understand that the Inland Revenue will be writing to my right hon. Friend shortly. They aim to reply to 80 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days, and 95 per cent. within 40 working days.

The Revenue have not been able to deal with all customers' queries about their tax credit overpayments as quickly as they would have liked. Each case has to be reviewed on Its own merits and this inevitably takes some time. However, the Department have recently increased the staff deployed on this work and streamlined their procedures.

Education Expenditure

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received on spending plans for education. [213431]

Mr. Boateng: The Government regularly receive representations on spending plans for education.

This Government are taking forward a programme of high investment in education and skills. From being £36 billion in 1996–97, the education and skills budget for the UK stands at £63 billion in 2004–05, and is set to rise to £76 billion by 2007–08.

Health Expenditure

Mr. McCabe: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his estimates for projected levels of public expenditure on health. [213428]

Mr. Boateng: As a result of the Government's policy in successive spending reviews, by 2008 public expenditure on health will have risen by 90 per cent. in real terms since 1997, to nearly £110 billion across the United Kingdom. That is the biggest-ever sustained increase in national health service funding.

New Deal

Andy Burnham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the economic effects of the New Deal. [213433]

Mr. Boateng: Since 1998, over 1.2 million people have found work through the New Deal, contributing to a fall in long-term unemployment of three quarters. Independent research has confirmed the positive economic effects of the New Deal, finding, for example, that the economy as a whole is richer by £500 million a year as a result of the New Deal for Young People; that the social benefits outweigh the costs; and that the New Deal for lone parents doubles the employment chances of participants.

PES Database

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a list of the tables and related fields of his Department's Public Expenditure Survey database together with diagrams showing the table relationships. [213590]

Mr. Boateng: The data collected on the database is used to provide information to Parliament, and the public more widely, on public expenditure plans and outturn. In particular, the Public Expenditure System database is used to produce spending data in a range of publications, copies of which are held in the House of Commons Library. These publications include:

Main Estimates

Budgets and Spending Reviews

Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA); and

Departmental Reports

Working Tax Credits

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Stoke-on-Trent have claimed working tax credit in each year since the credit was introduced. [213063]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of in-work families in Stoke-on-Trent who have successfully claimed tax credits I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave him on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 408–09W.

The number of other families in Stoke-on-Trent who have made claims for tax credits is not available.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of whether the BBC was in breach of its duties under the Communications Act 2003 in screening Jerry Springer—the Opera; whether the programme was in breach of the BBC's agreement with the Government on generally accepted standards; and what account her Department will take of whether breaches occurred in the process of renewal of the BBC's Charter. [211794]

Estelle Morris: The Department did not make an assessment. The Communications Act 2003 does not place duties about programme standards directly on the BBC. The Communications Act puts an obligation on Ofcom to set standards for the content of television and radio programmes which Ofcom is responsible for enforcing in relation to the BBC.

The Department expects the BBC to comply with its obligations under the Agreement and the Board of Governors is the primary means by which such compliance is secured. Articles 7(1)*(f)* and 7(1)*(b)* of the Charter require the Governors to satisfy themselves that all of the activities of the BBC are carried out in accordance with their legal obligations and with the Agreement. Within the framework of the Charter and Agreement, the BBC is independent in editorial matters.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total expenditure by her Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211675]

Mr. Caborn: The total cost to the Department of using external consultants in 1996–97 was £418,155.95 and in 2003–04 £473,785.35. The spend to date figure for 2004–05 is £492,161.42. No estimate of cost of employing external consultants in 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 has been made.

Departmental Policies (Edinburgh, North and Leith)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency, the effects on Edinburgh, North and Leith of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211575]

Mr. Caborn: Most of the matters for which the Department is responsible in England have been devolved in Scotland to the Scottish Executive. However, there are some reserved areas in which the Government have introduced initiatives which affect Edinburgh, North and Leith.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licenses for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Edinburgh, North and Leith with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was £2,810.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing Department for Culture, Media and Sport gambling premises to Licensing Boards. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and Licensing Boards will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Edinburgh, North, and Leith, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

No statistics are available for international visits or expenditure by constituency. However, VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination benefit all parts of the country, including Edinburgh, North and Leith.

Information from the national lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Edinburgh, North and Leith has benefited from over 720 awards totalling over £38.5 million. Of these, 46 awards worth over £4.3 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Departmental Policies (Hull, North)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull, North of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211807]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Kingston upon Hull, North since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million. A school sport partnership involving eight School Sport Co-ordinators and 47 Primary Link teachers is based at St. Mary's College in Kingston upon Hull, North, which received a Sport England Lottery grant of over £390,000 towards its costs. St. Mary's College has also benefited from a Sport England grant of almost £2.5 million to improve its sports facilities, and over 40 sports projects in Kingston upon Hull, North have benefited from Awards for All grants worth over £140,000.

We have increased our national funding to the arts by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Funding to Arts Council England, Yorkshire and the Humber has increased by 85 per cent. since 1997–98. Kingston upon Hull, North has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals in Kingston upon Hull, including regular funding for the Hull Truck Theatre and Hull Time Based Arts.

Schools in Kingston upon Hull, North were included in the first phase of the Creative, Partnerships programme which began in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give school children and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop Creative Partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Schools in Kingston upon Hull, North also benefit from the Humber Youth Music Action Zone, know as Music4U, which is run by a consortium of local authorities, including Kingston upon Hull City Council, and the National Centre for Early Music. Music4U was set up in September 2001 and has so far been awarded three grants totalling over £760,000. It has already reached over 15,000 children and young people, 85 per cent. of whom were first-time participants.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Kingston upon Hull North will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Kingston upon Hull, North also benefits from museums initiatives in Kingston upon Hull. Kingston upon Hull Museums is a partner in the Yorkshire and Humber Hub, which will receive £3.36 million in the period 2003–06. Wilberforce House in Kingston upon Hull is benefiting from funding as part of the Renaissance in the Regions initiative to establish it as a centre for study, teaching and collections access as part of the 200th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in 2007. Kingston upon Hull Museums' collections relating to local history have been designated as part of our Designation Scheme to recognise outstanding collections in non-national museums. Since 2000 they have received grants totalling over £220,000 from the Designation Challenge Fund.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licenses for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Kingston upon Hull, North with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 3,815.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11pm on new year's eve to 11am on new year's day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Kingston upon Hull, North, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Kingston upon Hull has increased with the assistance of Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including Yorkshire Forward. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Kingston upon Hull, North. Although no assessment is made of the precise effect of this support for tourism in Kingston upon Hull, North, we estimate that total expenditure from overnight stays in the Yorkshire and Humber region by overseas and domestic visitors rose from £1.95 billion in 2000 to almost £2.25 billion in 2003.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth almost £940,000 to Kingston upon Hull since 2 May 1997, including a grant of £20,000 to St. Alban, Hall Road in Kingston upon Hull, North.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Kingston upon Hull, North has benefited from over 200 awards totalling over £10.5 million. Of these, 46 awards worth over £3.8 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

In addition, Kingston upon Hull and four other Yorkshire cities have been jointly awarded £1.75 million in Lottery funding from the Urban Cultural Programme, which was established by the Millennium Commission and Arts Council England to build on the success of the Government's competition to select the UK's nomination for European Capital of Culture 2008.

English Heritage

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the projected grant in aid funding for English Heritage is for each of the next three years. [213076]

Mr. Caborn: English Heritage's grant in aid funding for the next three years is as follows:

	£
2005–06	127,768,000
2006–07	130,768,000
2007–08	131,738,000

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by her Department in the last three years. [207825]

Mr. Caborn: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W, by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Mr. Leslie).

Lottery Funds

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will ensure that investment income accruing to the lottery distributor during delays in complex heritage projects remains with that distributor. [213867]

Estelle Morris: Under the measure proposed in clause 8 of the National Lottery Bill, investment income will be shared out in the same fixed proportions as each distributor's share of operator-related lottery income. This will end the current arrangement whereby those distributors that manage to reduce their balances receive proportionately less investment income, and it will also make the estimation of future income simpler and more transparent for all. When this measure takes effect the Heritage Lottery Fund will therefore receive 16.67 per cent. of all the income that the lottery generates for good causes.

Olympic Games

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from national governing bodies for sport on the impact of devolution on UK medal prospects in Olympic team sports. [211742]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has received no specific representations regarding the impact of devolution on UK medal prospects in Olympic team sports.

Tourism

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the balance of payments in the tourism sector was in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [213075]

Mr. Caborn: The balance of payments in tourism for the UK in each of the last two years for which figures are available is shown in the table.

£ million

Tourism balance of payments	*2002*	*2003*
Expenditure by overseas residents in the UK	11,737	11,855
Expenditure by UK residents overseas	26,962	28,550
Balance of payments	–15,225	–16,695

Source:

International Passenger Survey

Provisional figures for 2004 will be published on the 9 February on the National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk

Pay TV

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many pay television subscriptions the Department had in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [207655]

Mr. Caborn *[pursuant to the reply, 10 January 2005, Official Report, c.48W]:* I regret that in my previous answer the figures given for pay television subscription channels were incorrect. The correct figure for each of the years 2002–03 and 2003–04 is £20,203.92.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on how many occasions her Department's Ministers used the Queen's flight in each of the past five years. [213696]

Mr. Caborn: The Queen's flight service has not been used by any Ministers in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the past five years.

Religious/Cultural Bodies (Funding)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will establish a fund similar to that set up with national lottery funding but which is accessible to those unable to accept money from the lottery on religious or cultural grounds. [213971]

Estelle Morris: We have no plans to do so. There is already a wide range of funds—in the public, private and voluntary sectors—available to those who do not wish to receive lottery money.

Sports Funding

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what date she expects Lord Carter to publish the report on the review of the co-ordination of national sports effort and resources. [213294]

Mr. Caborn: I am expecting Lord Carter's report on the co-ordination of national sports effort and resources shortly. A date has yet to be set for publication.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Taxi Drivers

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on taxi drivers in North Belfast have been reported in the last year; and who was found to be responsible in each case. [211969]

Mr. Pearson: Due to the nature of the statistics held by PSNI, it is not possible to ascertain how many specific attacks upon taxi drivers occurred between 1 January 2004 and 27 January 2005, as victims are not identified by occupation. However, the DCU Commander in North Belfast reports that between those dates 124 incidents involving taxis occurred. These incidents vary in nature and include incidents where persons run off without paying, as well as more serious offences such as assault and aggravated criminal damage.

The vast majority of those incidents are unrelated to the recent series of attacks upon taxis and taxi drivers in North Belfast. The recent spate of attacks upon taxis in that area can be attributed to organized criminality with links both to the UVF and LVF. Since 1 December 2004, North Belfast DCU has recorded 12 incidents involving taxis. On three of those occasions a taxi driver was threatened. On 10 of those occasions a taxi has been set alight.

Autism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time from diagnosis for *(a)* occupational therapy and *(b)* speech therapy assessment of children with autistic spectrum disorders is in each of the health board regions in the Province. [212177]

Angela Smith: Information is not available on waiting times for occupational therapy in respect of children with autistic spectrum disorder.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources have been provided for the treatment of autistic spectrum disorders in the Western Health Board area. [212178]

Angela Smith: The Department's "Priorities for Action 2004/05" requires boards and trusts to enhance diagnostic, assessment and early intervention services for children with autism. An additional £500,000 has been allocated to boards for this purpose, of which the Western Health and Social Services Board received £85,000.

Consultant Vacancies

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant vacancies there are in each health trust in the Province, broken down by specialty; and for how long each post has been vacant. [212164]

Angela Smith: Information requested is as follows.

Number of consultant vacancies by Health Trust as at January 2005

Trust	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	11	11.00
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0	0.00
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	7	7.00
Causeway HSS Trust	8	8.00
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	0	0.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	13	11.64
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	10	10.00
Foyle Community HSS Trust	2	1.30
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	3	3.00
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	2	2.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	9	8.50
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	2	2.00
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0	0.00
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	15	12.94
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	3	3.00
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	12	12.00
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	0	0.00
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	14	14.00
Total	111	106.38

Source:

NI Health Trusts

Number of consultant vacancies by speciality as at January 2005

Consultant specialism	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Addictions/substance abuse	1	1.00
Anaesthetics	18	18.00
Cardiac anaesthetics	1	1.00
Intensive care anaesthetics	1	1.00
Paediatric anaesthetics	2	2.00
Cardiology	3	3.00
Cardiothoracic surgery	1	1.00
Care of the elderly	1	1.00
Care of the elderly (stroke care)	1	1.00
Clinical oncology	2	2.00
Ear, nose and throat	3	3.00
Emergency medicine (accident and emergency)	2	2.00
Endocrinology	1	1.00
Fractures	1	0.55
General internal medicine/care of the elderly	1	1.00
General internal medicine and subspecialty	2	2.00
General medicine	2	2.00
General surgery	8	8.00
Breast surgery	1	1.00
Surgery-plastic and burns	1	1.00
Haematology	4	4.00
Histo cyto pathology	4	3.50
Histopathology	1	1.00
Immunology	1	1.00
Microbiology	1	1.00
Nephrology	1	1.00
Obstetrics and gynaecology	3	2.14
Obstetrics and gynaecology-HRT	1	0.27
Opthalmics	1	1.00
Paediatrics	1	1.00
Physician	3	2.18
Physician in diabetics	1	1.00
Psychiatry	3	4.30
Psychiatry-adult	3	1.00
Psychiatry-child and adolescent	4	4.00
Forensic psychiatry	2	2.00
Radiology	16	15.44
Radiology-breast screening	2	2.00
Renal	2	2.00
Restorative dentistry	1	1.00
Urology	3	3.00
Total	111	106.38

Source:

NI Health Trusts

Length of time each consultant post has been vacant as at January 2005

Trust/consultant:	*Length of time post vacant*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust:	
General medicine	Post vacant for 4 months
General surgery	Post vacant for 11 months
Ear, nose and throat	Post vacant for 22 months
2 × Anaesthetics	Post vacant for 15 months
Radiology	Post vacant for 19 months
Radiology	Post vacant for 2 years
Microbiology	Post vacant for 3 years
Oncology	Post vacant over 3 years
Haematology	Post vacant for 19 months
Haematology	Post vacant for 20 months
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust:	
Nil	Nil
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust:	
Haematology	Post vacant for 4 months
Clinical oncology	New post
Radiology	New post
2 × General surgery	New posts
2 × Urology	New posts
General surgery	Post vacant for 4 months
General surgery	Post vacant for 5 years
Emergency medicine	Post vacant for 1 year
Urology	Post vacant for 5 months
Anaesthetics	Post vacant for 1 month
Radiology	Post vacant for 1 month
Psychiatry—adult	Post vacant for 6 months
Psychiatry—old age	Post vacant for 6 months
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust:	
Nil	Nil
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust:	
Anaesthetics	Post vacant for 11 months
Anaesthetics	New post pending appointment of a consultant breast surgeon
Haematology	Post vacant for 20 months
Histo/Cyto pathology	New post
Histo/Cyto pathology	Post vacant for 15 months
Histo/Cyto pathology	Post vacant for 17 months
Histo/Cyto pathology	Post vacant for 19 months
Cardiology	Post vacant for 1 year
Obstetrics/gynaecology	Post vacant for 16 months
3 × Radiology	New posts
Breast surgery	New post
Down Lisburn HSS Trust:	
2 × Psychiatry-child and adolescent	Posts vacant over 2 years
General internal medicine and care of the elderly	Post vacant over 2 years
General internal medicine and subspecialty	Post vacant for 7 months
General internal medicine and subspecialty	Post vacant for 1 month
General surgery	Post vacant over 1 year
Addictions and substance abuse	Post vacant for 9 months
2 × Anaesthetics	Both posts have been filled by long-term locums, but one became vacant again in December 2004
Endocrinology	Appointment has now been made. Due to start in March 2005.
Foyle Community HSS Trust:	
Psychiatry	Post vacant for 10 months
Psychiatry	Post vacant over 2 years
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust:	
Psychiatry—child and adolescent	Post vacant for 8 months
2 × Anaesthetics	Posts vacant for 9 months
Homefirst Community HSS Trust:	
Psychiatry—adult	Post vacant for 4 months
Psychiatry—adult	Post vacant for 20 months

Length of time each consultant post has been vacant as at January 2005

Trust/consultant:	*Length of time post vacant*
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust:	
General surgery	Post vacant for 9 months
Obstetrics	Post vacant for 1 month
Care of the elderly (interest in stroke care)	Post vacant for 1 year
Emergency medicine	Post vacant for 1 year
Radiology	Post vacant for 1 year
Radiology	Post vacant for 2 years
Physician in diabetics	Post vacant for 9 months
Cardiology	Post vacant for 1 year
Opthalmics	New post
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust:	
Paediatrics	Post vacant for 10 months
Radiology	Post vacant for 20 months
North and West Belfast HSS Trust:	
Nil	Nil
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust:	
Obstetrics/gynaecology	Interviews February 2005
Surgery—plastics and burns	Appointment has now been made. Due to start in February 2005
Histopathology	Interviews February 2005
Restorative dentistry	Interviews March 2005
2 × Paediatric anaesthetics	Long-term vacancies
Cardiothoracic surgery	Long-term vacancy
Fractures	Long-term vacancy
2 × radiology	Long-term vacancies
Anaesthetics	Long-term vacancy
Cardiac anaesthetics	New post—has not been advertised as yet
Physician	Long-term vacancy
Obstetrics/gynaecology (HRT)	Long-term vacancy
Immunology	Long-term vacancy
South and East Belfast HSS Trust:	
Psychiatry—adolescent	Post vacant for 5 months
2 × Forensic psychiatry	New posts—have not been advertised as yet
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust:	
1 × General surgery	Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust were unable to provide details on the length of time each post was vacant
3 × Anaesthetics	
2 × Renal	
2 × ENT	
3 × Radiology	
1 × General medicine	
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust:	
Nil	Nil
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust:	
5 × Anaesthetics	Posts vacant for 8 years
Anaesthetics—intensive care	Post vacant for 6 months
Nephrology	Post vacant for 2 years
Physician—care of the elderly	Post vacant for 2 years
Radiology	Post vacant for over 2 years
Radiology—breast screening	Post vacant for 3 years
Radiology—breast screening	Post vacant for 1 year
Cardiology	Post vacant for 6 months
2 × Physician	Posts vacant for 2 years

Costello Report

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons pupils in special units were not included in the figures on post-primary enrolments used in the "Costello Report". [213772]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Strangford (Mrs. Robinson) on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 422W.

Counterfeit Medicines

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reports he has received of counterfeit medications being discovered in the Province within the legitimate wholesale medicines supply chain. [212170]

Angela Smith: There have been no reports of counterfeit medications appearing within the legitimate wholesale medicines supply chain in Northern Ireland.

Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of dentists in the Province. [212180]

Angela Smith: In order to facilitate the supply of suitably qualified dentists the Department funds a one-year vocational training (VT) scheme and a two-year general professional training (GPT) scheme. Prior to August 2000 there were 20 VT places, this has been increased to the current level of 24 VT places and four dental trainees in each year of the GPT scheme. This represents an annual total of 28 health service training places for graduate dentists in Northern Ireland.

The requirement for dentists is monitored through the Department's ongoing work force planning process.

Dismissed Health Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are taken to ensure health service employers are fully informed *(a)* of potential employees who have been forced to leave other posts within the health sector and *(b)* of the details of their departure. [212167]

Angela Smith: Recruitment and selection procedures are a matter for individual Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) employers and it is the responsibility of the employer to carry out all necessary pre-employment checks. In addition, for medical and dental staff a system of alert letters is in place whereby all HPSS employers are notified in cases where a doctor or dentist, who has been dismissed or suspended, poses a potential risk to the safety of patients and it is believed he/she will seek work elsewhere. The Department is currently reviewing the procedures that exist for alert letters with a view to potentially extending the process to cover other health care staff.

Firearms Order

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how he defines a fit person to be entrusted with a firearm within the terms of Article 9 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004; and if he will make a statement. [211777]

Mr. Pearson: There is no statutory definition of the term fit person as used in Articles 5 and 9 of the Firearms (Northern Ireland) Order 2004. The protection and safety of the public lies at the heart of the legislation, which requires that an applicant for a firearms certificate or a current holder, should be a person who is fit to be entrusted with a firearm or ammunition. There are various matters which the Chief Constable may take into account before making a decision. Guidance on this and all other forearms licensing issues is contained in the Guidance on Northern Ireland Firearms Controls, which is available on the Northern Ireland Office website www.nio.gov.uk

Football

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Irish Football Association on the staging of the under-19 European Football Championships in venues across Northern Ireland. [211876]

Angela Smith: Extensive discussions have taken place with the Irish Football Association (IFA) on the staging of the Under-19 European Football Championships in venues across Northern Ireland. I can confirm that the IFA have set up a limited company to oversee the arrangements for hosting the tournament which will attract funding from the Sports Council for Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Events Company, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, UK Sport, Belfast city council and Ballymena borough council.

Former Loyalist Paramilitaries

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what recent discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his Ministers have had on the funding of measures dealing with schemes for former loyalist paramilitaries. [211968]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Recent meetings with representatives of loyalism have focused on a range of issues affecting Protestant communities in general. All discussion has been in the context of ongoing work to address the needs of working class Protestant communities. No specific funding proposals have been brought forward. Any work on this will be done through properly structured and audited initiatives.

I and my Ministers do, of course, continue to stress that real progress on these issues can only be made when paramilitary organisations give their unequivocal commitment to bringing an end to paramilitarism and criminality.

Health Service Development

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what advice has been given to health boards and trusts in the Province by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety regarding service development over the next three years. [212171]

Angela Smith: The Department is currently discussing with Boards the specific priority areas for service development for inclusion in Boards' Health and Wellbeing Investment Plans and Trust Delivery Plans. It has, however, already been made clear to Boards and Trusts that priority will be given to the reform and modernisation of hospital and associated primary and community care services. The Department expects significant increases in productivity and improved quality and safety of services to be achieved as a result of the ongoing re-configuration of existing services and new ways of working made possible by a range of pay reforms currently being implemented.

Juvenile Alcohol and Drug Admissions

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children *(a)* attended and *(b)* were admitted to hospital in the Province as the result of (i) alcohol and (ii) illegal drug use in the last year for which figures are available. [212175]

Angela Smith: Information is not available centrally on the number of children who attended hospital as a result of alcohol or illegal drug use. Information is collected on the number of admissions[1] of children to Northern Ireland hospitals as the result of alcohol and illegal drug use.

In 2003–04 (the latest data available) there were 90 admissions (based on primary diagnosis) to acute hospitals in Northern Ireland for children aged 16-years or under with an alcohol related illness.

In 2003–04 there were seven admissions (based on primary diagnosis) to acute hospitals in Northern Ireland for children aged 16-years or under with an illegal drug related illness.

[1] Discharges and Deaths are used as an approximation for admissions.

Knives

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation for Northern Ireland equivalent to the legislative provisions regarding knives proposed by the Scottish Executive; and what plans the Government have to reduce the use of knives in crimes in Northern Ireland. [211720]

Mr. Spellar: We are considering the incidence of knife crime in Northern Ireland and are closely monitoring the development of policies in other jurisdictions, including Scotland, to assess their appropriateness for Northern Ireland.

Legionnaires' Disease

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the recent outbreak of Legionnaires' disease in the North Down area; and what steps he is taking to prevent such an outbreak reccurring. [212039]

Angela Smith: Three people living in the North Down and Ards area were diagnosed with Legionnaires' disease since the end of December. An incident team chaired by a Communicable Diseases Control Consultant in the Eastern Health and Social Services Board was set up to investigate these cases.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSENI) and Environmental Health Officers are actively working to try and establish a source of the legionella infection and are continuing with their investigations. HSENI has liaised with the district council to arrange inspection of several cooling towers and similar plant and their retreatment/disinfection. Treatment regimes have also been reviewed and other potential sources of infection in the area examined. Appropriate advice on cleaning and decontamination measures has been provided. Further laboratory reports results are awaited in a number of cases.

Maternity Units

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 977W, on maternity units, what the reasons were for the temporary arrangement in December 2004; what form this arrangement took; and when it is expected to end. [212023]

Angela Smith: The midwife-led unit in Craigavon Area Hospital is currently operating with two rather than three midwives. These temporary arrangements were put in place due to staff sickness and a high level of obstetric activity within the main delivery suite and the maternity wards. This action has been necessary in order to ensure that a safe service is provided across all the trust's maternity services. I would emphasis that the extent of change was the reallocation of one midwife only and that this measure is temporary, circumstance-specific, and under continual review.

Migrant Workers (Translation Services)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will provide information about emergency services to newly arriving migrant workers in their own language upon arrival. [210372]

Mr. Spellar: There is a range of organisations, both statutory and voluntary, within Northern Ireland involved in the provision of support to migrant workers including the provision of information on services. Some provide "welcome packs" in English and a variety of minority languages where there is a demand. The Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has provided funding from its minority ethnic voluntary organisation fund for this purpose, for example to the South Tyrone Empowerment Programme.

Also the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is planning a booklet for migrant workers outlining where and how to seek advice, support and redress against racism and to access public services. This booklet is due to be published in March 2005. It is anticipated that the booklet will be published in a variety of languages.

However, we recognise that we still have a great deal to do in facing the challenges posed by the arrival of increasing numbers of migrant workers in Northern Ireland. This has been brought into stark relief by the horrific ordeal of the Ukrainian national who had her legs amputated after suffering from frostbite as a result of sleeping rough. Clearly, Government and others need to establish, as a matter of urgency, what lessons we can learn from this horrific experience. To this end a multi-agency review and assessment meeting is being facilitated by the northern health and social services board in the near future.

I have asked my officials to investigate whether there are gaps in provision of information services and welcome packs, how to plug any gaps and the scope for setting out minimum standards. We recognise, however, the crucial role of the voluntary and community sector in providing information that is tailored to specific communities across Northern Ireland and we would wish this to continue. I also wish to see employers and trade unions working with us on this important area.

The rapid changes in the composition of the migrant worker population in Northern Ireland and the sheer diversity of source countries for migrant workers means that it is unlikely to be practical to offer every single migrant worker, regardless of the language they speak, a welcome pack in their own mother tongue. However, I would hope that such packs could be made available in those languages that are most frequently used.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many migrant workers were estimated to be in Northern Ireland on 1 January; and how many he estimates had *(a)* a basic understanding of the English language and *(b)* access to an interpreter for urgent medical assistance if required. [210446]

Mr. Spellar: Research commissioned by the Office of the First Minister and "Deputy First Minister—Migrant Workers in Northern Ireland" (June 2004) indicates that:

> "migrant workers are a growing category of employees in Northern Ireland and they are a necessary factor for many employment sectors due to a shortage of available local labour".

I have arranged for copies of the research report to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

This research indicates the difficulty in identifying the total number of migrant workers in Northern Ireland with any degree of accuracy. In particular, nationals from countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) and family members of EEA nationals are exempt from immigration control and have a right to enter, reside and work in the UK without the permission of any UK authority. Thus there is no central body that records their migration to Northern Ireland. Migrant workers from outside the EEA are allowed to work here under work permit arrangements which are regulated by the Home Office.

The 2001 Census indicates that there were 5,940 people in Northern Ireland who were born in EU countries (excluding the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland) and 20,719 people born in non-EU countries. This gives a maximum figure of 26,659 people who could be classified as migrant workers or dependents of migrant workers.

Home Office records show that 3,253 applications for work permits were approved from employers with a Northern Ireland postcode in 2003 and 3,827 in 2004.

I have asked my officials to work with their colleagues in other Government Departments including the Home Office, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, trades unions and business interests to see how they can work together in this area, to improve the availability of information on flows of migrant workers into Northern Ireland—to ensure that Government Departments, agencies and others can respond effectively to the needs of migrant workers.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland is to be commended for the lead that it is taking in gathering examples of good practice in the employment of migrant workers. Many employers in both the public and the private sector are to be commended, too, for their good practice in working with and supporting employees from overseas. The Equality Commission has held a range of seminars and roundtable discussions to encourage employers and service providers to meet their obligations to migrant workers. Together with Business in the Community it is organising a "Migrant Workers: Building on Best Practice" conference for later in the year. I strongly support this initiative. I would wish to see greater exchange of good practice between employers (including trade unions) and recognition by all employers of their responsibilities—legal and moral—towards their workers and society in Northern Ireland.

I do not have details of the English language skills of migrant workers. We do know that the language barrier is a problem for many migrant workers, their family members and members of minority ethnic groups who do not speak English as their first language or who speak little English and for the statutory agencies involved in the provision of services. Government are committed to effective communication with all its customers and to ensuring that services are as accessible as possible to all members of the community, including people from minority ethnic groups and migrant workers. DHSSPS does not have information on the number of migrant workers accessing emergency medical services. In emergencies hospitals use interpreting services provided by Language Line and other providers.

For its part, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) introduced new interpretation procedures in September 2004. Telephone interpreters are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and are available from any phone, including mobiles, from any location. This has considerably increased the Police Service's ability to liaise quickly with individuals who cannot understand English. Face-to-face interpreters are also available if required.

Finally, the PSNI is currently working with its telephone interpretation service provider to investigate ways of handling emergency calls made by people who cannot speak English.

Nursing

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many whole-time equivalent nursing vacancies there are at each health trust in the Province. [212189]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of nursing vacancies by health trust as at 28 January 2005

Trust	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	51.87
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	12.59
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	77.35
Causeway HSS Trust	6.80
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	3.53
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	21.76
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	22.25
Foyle Community HSS Trust	48.26
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	54.60
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	31.03
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	71.80
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	2.50
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	44.82
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	139.03
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	17.33
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	0.00
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	5.80
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	37.38
Total	648.70

Source:
NI Health Trusts

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses from overseas were employed by each health trust in the Province on the latest date for which figures are available. [212190]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of nurses from overseas employed by health trust as at 28 January 2005

Trust	*Headcount*
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	33
Armagh and Dungannon HSS Trust	0
Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust	70
Causeway HSS Trust	13
Craigavon and Banbridge Community HSS Trust	2
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	41
Down Lisburn HSS Trust	56
Foyle Community HSS Trust	1
Greenpark Healthcare HSS Trust	56
Homefirst Community HSS Trust	47
Mater Infirmorum Hospital HSS Trust	54
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust	13
North and West Belfast HSS Trust	0
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust	219
South and East Belfast HSS Trust	0
Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust	22
Ulster Community and Hospitals Group HSS Trust	118
United Hospitals Group HSS Trust	67
Total	812

Source:
NI Health Trusts

Police Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers were on duty on average during *(a)* day and *(b)* night shifts in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by principal duty of each officer; [202868]

(2) how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers were on duty on the night of *(a)* 23 and *(b)* 24 November. [202871]

Mr. Pearson: The deployment of resources by the Police Service of Northern Ireland, on any day or night shift, is based upon predictive demand and intelligence. On 23 November 2004, the level of resources deployed in both operational regions of the PSNI (on both early and night shifts) was as follows:

Resources on duty in operational regions 23 November 2004

	Day	*Night*
Security duty	182	141
Call management	49	45
Station duty officer	63	51
Response policing team	633	449
Community policing team	533	81
Support to response and community policing (including custody officers, national intelligence model officers, operational planning, community safety officers, domestic violence officers, youth diversion officers, crime prevention officers etc.)	617	54
Senior command (chief inspector and above)	95	21
DCU criminal investigation	235	47
Tactical support group	284	105
Roads policing	84	16
Belfast regional control	18	18
Total	2,793	1,028

Notes:
1. This information relates to resources in both operational regions of the Police Service of Northern Ireland, rural and urban. They provide a snapshot only of resources at 3pm and 3am on early and night shift on 23 November 2004, and should be read in that context. These figures can vary due to shift changeovers and variable shift patterns.
2. The support provided to response and community policing teams has an important role in frontline service delivery. Community safety teams, domestic violence officers etc. all provide a frontline service, and deal with victims, perpetrators and witnesses on a daily basis.
3. It is not possible to state how many officers attached to all headquarters departments were on duty on that date as only manual records are held and a manual search would be required that would incur disproportionate cost. This includes murder investigation teams, serious crime teams etc.

School Interface Funding

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which schools in North Belfast have received funding to address interface problems in each year since 2000. [211971]

Mr. Gardiner *[pursuant to the reply, 1 February 2005, Official Report, c.879W]:* The schools in North Belfast which have received funding to address interface problems in each year since 2000 are:

Financial year	*School*
2000–01	None
2001–02	Holy Cross Girls' primary school Wheatfield primary school
2002–03	Holy Cross Girls' primary school Wheatfield primary school
(From December 2001)	Ballysillan primary school Cliftonville primary school Currie primary school Grove primary school Holy Cross Boys' primary school Holy Family primary school Lowood primary school Mercy primary school Our Lady's Deanby Gardens primary school Sacred Heart primary school St. Mary's Star of the Sea primary school St. Patrick's primary school
(From March 2002)	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain School Ben Mhadagain Prep Carr's Glen primary school Cavehill primary school Cedar Lodge Special primary school Edmund Rice (Christian Brothers) primary school Ligoniel primary school Our Lady of Lourdes primary school Seaview primary school St. Gabriel's college St. Therese of Lisieux primary school St. Vincent de Paul primary school Star of the Sea Girls' primary school
2003–04	Holy Cross Girls' primary school Wheatfield primary school Ballysillan primary school Cliftonville primary school Currie primary school Grove primary school Holy Cross Boys' primary school Holy Family primary school Lowood primary school Mercy primary school Our Lady's Deanby Gardens primary school Sacred Heart primary school

Financial year	*School*
	St. Mary's Star of the Sea primary school
	St. Patrick's primary school
	Bunscoil Bheann Mhadagain
	Carr's Glen primary school
	Cavehill primary school
	Cedar Lodge special primary school
	Edmund Rice (Christian Brothers) primary school
	Ligoniel primary school
	Our Lady of Lourdes primary school
	Seaview primary school
	St. Therese of Lisieux primary school
	St. Vincent de Paul primary school
	Star of the Sea Girls' primary school
2004–05	Holy Cross Girls' primary school
	Wheatfield primary school
	Currie primary school
	Holy Family primary school
	Ligoniel primary school
	Our Lady of Mercy secondary school

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures are in place to assist key workers in obtaining affordable housing within the Greater London area; and if he will make a statement. [213380]

Keith Hill: Affordable housing assistance for eligible key workers within the Greater London area is available through the Key Worker Living programme. The £690 million programme provides:

Equity loans of up to £50,000 to help key workers buy a home on the open market or a new property built by a registered social landlord.

Higher-value equity loans of up to £100,000 for a small group of school teachers with the potential to become leaders of London's education system in the future.

Shared ownership of newly built properties.

Intermediated rented accommodation.

Access to short term rented accommodation through the NHS Trusts.

Key workers may also benefit from the shared ownership and homebuy programmes funded by the Housing Corporation to help existing social tenants and those on waiting lists into home ownership.

Buildings Demolition (Liverpool)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, *(b)* the Minister for the Arts and *(c)* the Minister for Media and Heritage about his proposals to demolish buildings in Liverpool. [213509]

Keith Hill: There is close co-operation between the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to ensure that heritage is an important consideration in regeneration schemes.

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with English Heritage about his plans to demolish buildings in Liverpool. [213510]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is ensuring that New Heartlands housing market renewal pathfinder, Liverpool Vision and Liverpool city council are working with English Heritage to ensure historic character and local distinctiveness can be used as positive drivers for regeneration and renewal in the city.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average business rates bill for businesses in England has been in each year since 1997–98; and what the estimated average bill will be in 2005–06. [211922]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested for 1997–98 to 2004–05 inclusive is tabled as follows; that for 2005–06 is not yet available.

Average business rates bills; local lists, England

	£
1997–98	7,011
1998–99	7,078
1999–2000	7,393
2000–01	8,111
2001–02	8,888
2002–03	8,999
2003–04	9,135
2004–05	9,312

Note:

Net rate yield from local lists divided by the number of hereditaments on local lists as at 31 December of the previous year.

Source:

NNDR returns from billing authorities

The rateable values for individual properties—and hence actual rates bills—vary greatly. Changes in the total for some years around 2000–01 are affected by transfers of properties from the central list to local lists, transfers of crown properties to local lists and the adjustment made to the multiplier at the time of the 2000 revaluation to take account of losses from appeals.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department will reply to the letter of 21 December 2004 from the hon. Member for Walsall, North transferred from the Department of Trade and Industry, concerning a constituent. [213490]

Yvette Cooper: The Under-Secretary, my hon. Friend the Member for Corby (Phil Hope), replied to my hon. Friend's letter on 2 February 2005.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average band D council tax has been in each Government office region in each year since 1997–98. [211976]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is given in Table 2.2f of "Local Government Financial Statistics, England, No. 15 2004", a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. The table can also be found at http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/lgfs/lgfsl5/tables/lgfsl5-2-2f.xls.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211608]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government offices for the regions, has granted two contracts to Fujitsu in the last two years. These were for Managed IT Services to the Government Offices for the Regions, and were annual extensions of an existing contract pending recompetition. The contracts were each worth £1.75 million, and were procured through the Office of Government Commerce GCAT catalogue.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has granted no contract to EDS or jointly EDS and Fujitsu in either of the last two years.

Departmental Policies (Preseli Pembrokeshire)

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since it was established. [211325]

Yvette Cooper: Along with other Government Departments, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to improving the lives of people across the whole of the United Kingdom, including South Wales.

However, the services for which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is directly responsible in England are mostly devolved and therefore a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Departmental Television Subscriptions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which television channels comprise the cheapest available business cable and satellite package that his Department subscribes to. [211170]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister no longer subscribes to any cable or satellite television packages, other than those provided to Ministers and designated officials via the Parliamentary Video network. These are part of the House of Commons VIP account, which is delivered to all MPs and ministerial offices free of charge. All other television channels provided to officials are now via free to air services.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether private ministerial offices had access to the Sky Sports 1 television channel prior to November 2003. [211235]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. Since then its ministerial offices have been served with television via the Parliamentary Video network. This is part of the House of Commons VIP account, which is delivered to all MPs free of charge rather than being a subscription service. The service is administered by Initial Communications for the House Commons and is also made available free of charge to the offices of those MPs that hold ministerial posts. The package includes 24 channels, division bells and annunciator. Sky Sports 1, 2 and 3 are also included.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much Swale borough council has paid in disabled facilities grant in each year since 1997; [211789]

(2) how much Swale borough council has allocated to disabled facilities as a percentage of its housing allocation since 1997; [211790]

(3) how many disabled people in Sittingbourne and Sheppey applied for a disabled facilities grant in each year since 1997; and how many received an award; [211791]

(4) how much has been allocated to *(a)* Kent county council and *(b)* Swale borough council for the disabled facilities grant in each year since 1997; [211792]

(5) what estimate has been made of the number of disabled people waiting for disabled facilities grant to be paid in Swale. [211793]

Keith Hill: The following table shows Swale borough council's expenditure on disabled facilities grant (DFG) as a proportion of their total Housing Investment Programme (HIP) allocation. Column one shows the annual allocation to Swale from the Government's ring-fenced grant to support local authorities' DFG programmes. This grant covers 60 per cent. of each authority's total DFG expenditure. Swale's total DFG expenditure is shown in column two. Column four gives this amount as a proportion of the authority's total HIP allocation shown in column three.

£000

	(1) *Government allocation of ring fenced grant for DFG*	*(2)* *Total DFG expenditure*	*(3)* *Total housing capital allocation*	*(4)* *Percentage of total housing allocation spent on DFG*
1997–98	408	617	1,546	40.0
1998–99	203	689	1,552	44.4
1999–2000	223	633	1,499	42.2
2000–01	242	667	1,706	39.1
2001–02	240	644	1,510	42.6
2002–03	276	616	1,514	40.7
2003–04	420	817	1,407	58.1
2004–05	420	n/a	n/a	n/a

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect information on how many disabled people in particular areas within local authorities have applied for DFG, or the number of people waiting for DFG, and could provide it only at disproportionate costs. County councils are not responsible for administering DFG and therefore receive no specific funding for it.

Domestic Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average domestic rates bill per household in England was in each year from 1975 to its abolition. [211921]

Mr. Raynsford: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1002W.

Fire Cover

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department was consulted on the proposed reduction in fire cover for the King's Cross/St. Pancras transport interchange. [213758]

Mr. Raynsford: Yes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was one of the consultees to all the draft Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP), including the London Fire Safety Plan. The draft plan for the financial year 2005–06 was issued on 28 October with a three-month consultation which commenced on 8 November. The IRMP is about deploying resources to respond to today's risks and needs rather than replicating historic patterns of deployment. The authority has identified that the current location of appliances does not relate to today's risks. The proposals contained in the draft London Fire Safety Plan are subject to extensive consultation.

Mr. Dobson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department was consulted on the possible impact on the response to a terrorist incident in central London of the proposed reductions in fire cover in central London. [213759]

Mr. Raynsford: Yes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was one of the consultees to all the draft Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP), including the London Safety Plan. The IRMP is about making changes to respond to today's changing needs—which include the risk of terrorist attack. The authority has been closely involved in London's planning (under the leadership of London Resilience Forum) for the protection of Londoners from the consequences of a terrorist attack, working closely with government, and other partners to improve its ability to respond to and deal with such incidents.

Firefighters

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have for revisions to the injury benefits arrangements for firefighters. [213967]

Phil Hope: As required by Inland Revenue rules, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently preparing proposals for consultation on an injury benefits scheme for firefighters which would replace that currently available in the Firefighters' Pension Scheme. Any scheme would include the death and serious injury award provided for in the conditions of service.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the proposed new minimum pension age for firefighters is. [213968]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recently completed consultations on proposals for new pension arrangements for firefighters which include a minimum pension age of 55 for members of the existing pension scheme who retire from April 2013, and for all members of a new pension scheme which we intend to introduce in April 2006. We are considering the responses we have received.

Gypsies/Travellers

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* Gypsy and *(b)* Traveller families are seeking permanent settlements in Kent. [213936]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* Gypsy and *(b)* Traveller families have made illegal encampments in Kent since 1997. [213937]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not held centrally on the number of families on unauthorised encampments, however the bi-annual count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans does provide information on the number of caravans on such sites. In January 1997 there were 94 caravans on unauthorised encampments in Kent. In July 2004 there were 64 caravans on unauthorised encampments in the county.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many court cases there have been in Kent involving illegal encampments by *(a)* Gypsy families and *(b)* Travellers since 1997. [213940]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provide only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* Gypsy and *(b)* Traveller camps have been opened in (i) Kent and (ii) Medway since 1997. [213966]

Yvette Cooper: Since 1997 one local authority site has been established in Kent, providing accommodation for 46 caravans.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold data centrally on the number of private Gypsy and Traveller sites established over time, however the bi-annual count does provide information on the number of caravans on such sites.

The number of caravans on authorised private sites in Kent has risen by 30 from 235 caravans in January 1997 to 265 caravans in July 2004.

The number of caravans on unauthorised developments of land without planning permission in Kent has increased from 54 in January 1997 to 120 in July 2004.

In the Medway council area, no new sites have been opened since 1997, either public or private.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated public expenditure by central Government on *(a)* authorised Traveller sites and *(b)* illegal Traveller encampments has been in each year since 1997. [211923]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created in May 2002. Since then it has provided the following funding to local authorities to enable them to renew and refurbish the existing network of local authority Gypsy and Traveller sites through its Gypsy Sites Refurbishment Grant.

	Grant paid (£)
2002–03	2,843,847
2003–04	6,084,059
2004–05	[1]7,739,726

[1] Allocation

£8 million is available for the 2005–06 financial year.

The costs associated with unauthorised camping are borne by individual local authorities or private landowners, rather than by central Government.

High Hedges

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent representations he has received about high hedges; and if he will make a statement. [213210]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received requests from members of the public and local authorities about when Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, which gives local authorities the powers to deal with complaints about high hedges, will be fully operational. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue guidance for local authorities at the same time as the Regulations to bring the legislation into force are laid before Parliament. We expect the complaints system to be fully operational early this year.

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to issue guidance to local authorities in respect of provisions to address problems with high hedges contained in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003. [213221]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to issue guidance for local authorities at the same time as the Regulations to bring Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 into force are laid before Parliament. We expect the complaints system to be fully operational early this year.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the number of complaints relating to high hedges that will be submitted to local authorities once the new system is fully operational; what proportion of local authorities will be ready to process complaints filed relating to high hedges in the first quarter of 2005; and what his estimate is of the average length of time to be taken to process a complaint. [213366]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that local authorities may expect to deal with 10,000 complaints relating to high hedges in the first three years after the legislation comes into force. All local authorities in England should be ready to process complaints once the legislation becomes fully operational. There is no set deadline for the local authority to resolve complaints.

Homeless Children

Mr. Webb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many children were living in temporary accommodation in *(a)* the South West region and *(b)* South Gloucestershire in each year since 1997. [212026]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities report their activities under homelessness legislation quarterly, and this includes the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation on the last day of the quarter. Information on the number of these households that contain dependent children and/or an expectant mother has been distinguished since March 2002 and the number of children in these households has been collected since June 2004.

The following table presents available information for all quarters since March 2002.

Households[1] which contain dependent children and/or an expectant mother, in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation, as at the end of the quarter

	2002				*2003*	
	March	*June*	*September*	*December*	*March*	*June*
South West Region[2]						
Households	3,110	3,710	4,030	2,740	3,350	4,250
Number of children	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
South Gloucestershire DC						
Households	214	248	245	281	281	295
Number of children	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	2003		*2004*		
	September	*December*	*March*	*June*	*September*
South West Region[2]					
Households	4,100	3,480	3,920	3,950	4,350
Number of children	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,180	7,050
South Gloucestershire DC					
Households	301	287	278	288	302
Number of children	n/a	n/a	n/a	476	475

[1] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following Acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.
[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 and may include estimates for any authority in the South West that failed to provide report data. The series is due to be revised in March 2005.
Source:
ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Homes (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he intends to designate specific sites for development within Hartlepool under the policies set out in Sustainable Communities: Homes for All. [213501]

Keith Hill: No. This is a matter for Hartlepool borough council to consider through its local development plan process working within national planning guidance and the regional spatial strategy. The Council's review of the Hartlepool Local Plan has recently considered the issue of housing need in the borough and has identified a range of housing sites. Housing market renewal in Hartlepool has also been recognised as a priority by the North East Housing Board. Tees Valley (including Hartlepool) is likely to be one of the beneficiaries of funding recently announced for Housing Market Renewal to be available from April 2006 and distributed through Regional Housing Boards.

Housing

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans there are for providing new housing with a selling price of £60,000 in the Chorley constituency. [214397]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently announced that we are working on a new First Time Buyers Initiative—of which the "Design for Manufacture" competition is an adjunct—designed to provide those who are unable to purchase a home outright with a "stepping stone" to independent home ownership. English Partnerships will be leading on the delivery of 15,000 homes to 2010. It is not possible, at the present time, to identify precisely where homes constructed under these schemes will be available. However, in addition to sites in English Partnership's portfolio we will be encouraging other landowners, such as local authorities, to use the scheme's model as a way of addressing affordability issues in their areas.

Housing Associations

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list local housing associations that have been given consent to impose a right of first refusal on Right to Buy or voluntary sales under section 197 of the Housing Act 2004. [213318]

Keith Hill: Consent does not have to be given to housing associations before they can impose a right of first refusal covenant in respect of Right to Buy or voluntary sales under the Housing Act 2004.

Under section 188 of the Housing Act 2004, all social landlords (local authorities or housing associations) that sell properties under the Right to Buy scheme are required to include a "right of first refusal" covenant in the conveyance or grant of lease. This covenant requires the owner of an ex-Right to Buy home who wishes to resell it within 10 years of the Right to Buy sale to offer it to the former landlord or to another social landlord, at market value. If the offer is not accepted, the owner is free to sell on the open market. Regulations setting out the procedures to be followed will be laid before Parliament shortly. These regulations will reflect the responses to the Government's consultation paper published in March 2004, and sent to landlords, representative bodies, and tenants' organisations.

Properties sold by housing associations:

under the preserved Right to Buy (available to tenants of housing associations who transferred with their homes from local authority landlords under stock transfer arrangements); and

under the Right to Acquire (available to assured tenants of housing associations in respect of properties built or acquired by their landlords with public funds since 1 April 1997) on voluntary terms at a discount

are also subject to this "right of first refusal", under section 171C of the Housing Act 1985 (in relation to the preserved Right to Buy), section 17 of the Housing Act 1996 (in relation to the Right to Acquire), and section 200 of the Housing Act 2004 (in relation to voluntary disposals, unless waived with the specific consent of the Housing Corporation).

Consent is still required for the imposition of a right of first refusal covenant in areas which have been designated as rural by the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister under section 157 of the Housing Act 1985, but this is not a change brought about by the Housing Act 2004.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government's policy on the extension of the right-to-buy to housing associations has changed. [209785]

Keith Hill: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 814–15W.

Letter Boxes

Ms Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning regulation changes his Department is planning to introduce to address safety concerns over low-level letter boxes, in line with standard EN 13724. [213721]

Phil Hope: EN 13724 is a voluntary standard setting out specifications covering the height, positioning and design of letter boxes for ergonomic and safety reasons. The Government have no plans to amend the Building Regulations to implement this standard.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans the Government have to reduce the level of inspection of local government in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [211975]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government are working to ensure that inspection focuses more clearly on improvement for service users and, through a risk based and proportionate approach, the overall burden of inspection will be significantly reduced.

Inspection programmes have not been worked up in detail for the years in question, but in 2004–05 there was a 30 per cent. reduction in the number of inspections compared to 2002–03.

The Audit Commission, which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sponsors, anticipates that by 2006–07, the volume of inspections needed for Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), including the corporate assessments planned for that year, should fall by 68 per cent. from the 2002–03 level.

Ministerial Tour

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what complaints he has received concerning his tour of the North East on 1 November 2004; what action has been taken concerning these complaints; and if he will place a copy of the correspondence in the Library. [212267]

Mr. Raynsford: No complaints have been received by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister concerning the tour of the North East on 1 November 2004.

Regional Referendums

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* polling, *(b)* focus group research and *(c)* other measures of public opinion were undertaken by his Department since June 2003 in relation to (i) the regional referendum in the North East and (ii) preparation for the referendums in the North West and Yorkshire and the Humber; and if he will place a copy of the reports in the Library. [213157]

Mr. Raynsford: The results of the Soundings Exercise were published in June 2003. This considered the level of interest in holding referendums on establishing elected regional assemblies in the English regions. Copies are already available in the Library of the House and on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

No polls, focus groups or other measures of public opinion on this subject have been undertaken since then by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Some research was undertaken to measure the effect of the Your Say Information Campaign in increasing awareness of the referendums but this was not a measure of public opinion.

Satellite Dishes

Mr. Olner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish his Department's response to the consultation paper, Satellite dishes and other antennas: consultation on possible changes to planning regulations for satellite dishes and other antennas. [213087]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has completed its analysis of the response to the consultation paper: "Satellite dishes and other antennas" and expects to make an announcement very shortly.

Second Homes (National Parks)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of how many and what percentage of houses in each National Park in England are second homes; and if he will make a statement. [213949]

Keith Hill: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Social Exclusion Unit

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* staff and *(b)* running costs of the Social Exclusion Unit was in the last year for which figures are available. [211895]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows.

(a) Staff costs for the Social Exclusion Unit for the financial year to 31 March 2004 were £2,342,000.

(b) The running cost of the Social Exclusion Unit for the same period was £1,212,000.

The Social Exclusion Unit does not have a separate "programme" budget and therefore the running cost figure includes the production costs of reports published during this period.

Social Housing

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homeless people there were in each local authority which has effected a large scale voluntary transfer in each of the two years *(a)* before and *(b)* after the transfer was effected. [210618]

Yvette Cooper: Information collected about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is in respect of households, rather than persons. The number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and the number of households in temporary accommodation arranged under homelessness legislation for those authorities that have effected a large scale voluntary transfer since the first quarter of 2003 is tabled as follows. This also shows the number of persons reported as sleeping rough.

	Rushcliffe LSVT date 20/01/2003			*Bradford LSVT date 24/02/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	33	119	—	229	55	—
April to June	26	122	0	392	56	0
July to September	46	119	—	375	55	—
October to December	41	145	—	312	45	—

	Rushcliffe *LSVT date 20/01/2003*			*Bradford* *LSVT date 24/02/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2003						
January to March	39	167	—	284	40	—
April to June	36	100	0	294	48	0
July to September	42	84	—	277	44	—
October to December	45	75	—	229	53	—
2004						
January to March	42	92	—	238	47	—
April to June	51	102	0	233	57	0
July to September	36	94	—	269	65	—

	Amber Valley *LSVT date 24/02/2003*			*Crewe and Nantwich* *LSVT date 10/03/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	73	28	—	33	11	—
April to June	82	31	0	35	13	0
July to September	67	32	—	59	13	—
October to December	86	30	—	34	7	—
2003						
January to March	100	24	—	61	7	—
April to June	90	33	0	98	10	0
July to September	95	31	—	67	5	—
October to December	76	28	—	43	7	—
2004						
January to March	92	27	—	49	4	—
April to June	80	33	0	75	11	0
July to September	60	37	—	62	11	—

	Walsall *LSVT date 27/03/2003*			*Craven* *LSVT date 31/03/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	351	48	—	5	7	—
April to June	23	62	0	8	7	0
July to September	90	41	—	[4]—	[4]—	—
October to December	81	39	—	2	2	—
2003						
January to March	96	29	—	3	3	—
April to June	76	40	0	5	5	0
July to September	104	50	—	7	6	—
October to December	102	59	—	16	12	—
2004						
January to March	147	62	—	14	11	—
April to June	[4]—	[4]—	0	8	14	0
July to September	128	58	—	11	12	—

	North Hertfordshire *LSVT date 31/03/2003*			*Forest of Dean* *LSVT date 31/03/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	45	108	—	39	38	—
April to June	46	110	0	43	40	0
July to September	56	113	—	52	50	—
October to December	64	123	—	53	57	—
2003						
January to March	36	126	—	48	59	—
April to June	50	118	0	30	30	0
July to September	43	115	—	37	33	—
October to December	27	105	—	29	33	—

	North Hertfordshire LSVT date 31/03/2003			*Forest of Dean LSVT date 31/03/2003*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2004						
January to March	45	118	—	37	31	—
April to June	37	128	0	19	28	0
July to September	30	121	—	31	34	—

	Scarborough LSVT date 15/12/2003			*Maidstone LSVT date 01/02/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	47	40	—	43	393	—
April to June	61	35	0	32	430	0
July to September	63	31	—	43	433	—
October to December	50	33	—	31	440	—
2003						
January to March	60	46	—	74	491	—
April to June	60	35	0	72	72	0
July to September	91	80	—	69	69	—
October to December	54	58	—	51	53	—
2004						
January to March	99	74	—	36	39	—
April to June	121	58	0	57	57	0
July to September	61	85	—	84	86	—

	Teignbridge LSVT date 04/02/2004			*Cherwell LSVT date 29/03/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	70	418	—	50	204	—
April to June	76	401	0	70	219	0
July to September	57	392	—	56	213	—
October to December	60	396	—	56	201	—
2003						
January to March	53	316	—	84	223	—
April to June	49	297	0	71	252	0
July to September	62	163	—	79	285	—
October to December	57	253	—	[4]—	[4]—	—
2004						
January to March	51	89	—	60	262	—
April to June	59	88	0	70	310	0
July to September	54	103	—	100	329	—

	Bromsgrove LSVT date 29/03/2004			*Hartlepool LSVT date 29/03/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	47	56	—	67	9	—
April to June	52	40	0	75	11	0
July to September	59	44	—	56	0	—
October to December	78	55	—	61	6	—
2003						
January to March	61	77	—	76	4	—
April to June	55	77	0	78	3	0
July to September	69	93	—	85	2	—
October to December	65	69		62	2	

	Bromsgrove LSVT date 29/03/2004			*Hartlepool LSVT date 29/03/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2004						
January to March	49	80	—	99	6	—
April to June	52	76	0	90	3	0
July to September	35	73	—	90	4	—

	Worcester LSVT date29/03/2004			*South Norfolk LSVT date 17/05/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	66	68	—	37	31	—
April to June	58	67	6	38	42	0
July to September	52	115	—	43	51	—
October to December	36	58	—	39	59	—
2003						
January to March	55	71	—	37	65	—
April to June	56	73	0	27	76	0
July to September	59	79	—	28	74	—
October to December	56	85	—	18	59	—
2004						
January to March	51	103	—	20	49	—
April to June	42	118	0	16	69	0
July to September	38	110	—	34	72	—

	Copeland LSVT date 07/06/2004			*Purbeck LSVT date 26/06/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	21	1	—	21	43	—
April to June	16	1	0	19	13	0
July to September	25	2	—	13	47	—
October to December	7	2	—	16	29	—
2003						
January to March	27	3	—	24	32	—
April to June	40	3	0	16	23	0
July to September	46	6	—	24	34	—
October to December	21	3	—	25	38	—
2004						
January to March	35	6	—	29	16	—
April to June	23	6	0	15	11	0
July to September	36	10	—	16	26	—

	Peterborough LSVT date 04/10/2004			*Forest Heath LSVT date 11/10/2004*		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]	*Accepted during quarter*[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002						
January to March	49	148	—	8	12	—
April to June	72	177	3	7	15	0
July to September	86	227	—	14	21	—
October to December	103	242	—	11	19	—
2003						
January to March	84	302	—	13	16	—
April to June	112	352	9	9	17	0
July to September	126	335	—	16	16	—
October to December	105	107	—	16	13	—
2004						
January to March	126	114	—	16	19	—
April to June	143	79	4	8	13	0
July to September	121	62	—	16	15	—

	Middlesbrough LSVT date 15/11/2004		
	Accepted during quarter[1]	*In temporary accommodation at end of quarter*[2]	*Rough sleepers*[3]
2002			
January to March	68	29	—
April to June	80	35	0
July to September	104	32	—
October to December	104	28	—
2003			
January to March	82	28	—
April to June	100	32	0
July to September	119	22	—
October to December	130	29	—
2004			
January to March	113	38	—
April to June	124	39	0
July to September	116	33	—

[1] Applicant households found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need group under homelessness legislation.

[2] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting re-allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.

[3] Mid-year estimate or recent street count.

[4] Data not reported by local authority. ODPM calculates estimates for any missing data fields in the compilation of national and regional totals.

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly) and Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (annual)

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Some households in temporary accommodation were being accommodated pending completion of inquiries into their application, or awaiting the outcome of an LA review/county court appeal against the authority's decision, or had been found intentionally homeless and subsequently were being accommodated for a reasonable period as permitted under legislation.

Information is also collected on the number of people who sleep rough—that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night. This is based on a combination of the most recent street counts and estimates made by local authorities.

Quarterly Statistical Releases on statutory homelessness published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister include information on both Acceptances and households in temporary accommodation at local authority level in an associated Supplementary Table. The latest Release of, 13 December, and previous editions are available both in the Library of the House and via the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. Statistics on Rough Sleepers are also published via the website.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on what basis additional land can be *(a)* given and *(b)* sold to registered social landlords after large scale voluntary transfers have been agreed. [211583]

Keith Hill: All disposals of housing land by local authorities to any party, including registered social landlords, require the consent of the Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. Consent is required under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985 if the disposal is at market value or under section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 if the disposal is below market value and therefore includes an element of financial assistance or gratuitous benefit. There are General Consents under both provisions which allow local authorities to dispose of housing land in certain circumstances without seeking the specific consent of the Secretary of State.

Sustainable Communities

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated expenditure on the National Centre for Sustainable Communities Skills is in the next financial year. [211159]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's budget in 2005–06 for the National Centre is £3.5 million.

Urban Task Force Report

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which recommendations from Lord Rogers's Urban Task Force report the Government have not yet implemented. [211162]

Keith Hill: The Government endorsed the principles behind all of the 105 recommendations in Lord Roger's report, the majority of which were accepted in full or in part and incorporated in the Urban White Paper "Our Towns and Cities: the future—Delivering an Urban Renaissance" published in November 2000. Our response to each recommendation is set out in an Annex to the White Paper. Significant progress has been made in implementing all of the measures in the White Paper. An Implementation Plan reporting on progress is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. These achievements are being built on by the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, launched in February 2003, which sets out a clear action plan for the long-term development of towns, cities and communities.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Carers

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of his Department's budget has been spent on public promotional and advertising campaigns on financial support available to carers in each year since 1997. [211990]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security, and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service.

The Department provides information on financial support available for carers through benefits information leaflets, websites and face to face and telephone contact with customers, their families, friends and carers, advisers and others. As these products and services cover many other areas it is not possible specifically to identify the cost of providing information for carers.

Christmas Cards

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many hours of staff time were taken up in preparation of Christmas cards in 2004; [205156]

(2) how many departmental staff have responsibility for preparing Christmas cards; [205157]

(3) what percentage of official departmental Christmas cards included a contribution to charity in their cost; and which charities benefited from such a contribution; [205158]

(4) what the cost of postage was for official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205159]

(5) what the cost was of purchasing official departmental Christmas cards in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; [205160]

(6) how many official Christmas cards were sent out by his Department in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004. [205161]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not co-ordinate the purchase and distribution of Christmas cards centrally. However, Christmas cards for Ministers and the Permanent Secretary are co-ordinated within the Department's Private Office and the following table details the number of cards purchased, together with the cost of these, for both 2003 and 2004.

	Ministers	*Permanent Secretary*
2003		
Quantity	1,050	130
Cost (£)	1,502	229
2004		
Quantity	1100	130
Cost (£)	1,649	210

All of the official Christmas cards sent out by Ministers and the Permanent Secretary included a contribution to charity. This contribution will be split equally, by the company from which they were purchased, between 70 different charities. Two staff were responsible for the ordering of these cards; however, the amount of time taken up on preparation is not available—the work is carried out alongside normal duties.

It is our policy to send mail by second class post wherever possible. The cost of postage for these cards is not recorded separately. All expenditure incurred in the purchase of official Christmas cards is made in accordance with the departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on principles set out in Government Accounting.

Christmas cards are also sent out by the Department's Executive Agencies, and I have asked the respective chief executives of these agencies to write to the right hon. Member separately. A copy of the letters will be placed in the Library.

Departmental Policies (Edinburgh, North and Leith)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency, the effects on Edinburgh, North and Leith of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211572]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Edinburgh, North and Leith will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

The figures can be broken down to national level which shows that 23 per cent. of adults and 6 per cent. of children in Scotland are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Edinburgh, North and Leith who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Edinburgh, North and Leith

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	4,900
2002	4,800
2003	5,300
2004	5,500

Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Source:

DWP Information Centre

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Edinburgh, North and Leith, the proportion in employment has risen to 76.6 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 1,700 in Edinburgh, North and Leith alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 1,400 families in Edinburgh, North and Leith.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of October 2004, around 3,265 pensioners in Edinburgh, North and Leith are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £42.90 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. respectively. Some 11,000 pensioners in Edinburgh, North have benefited from this increase.

Departmental Policies (Hull, North)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Hull, North constituency, the effects on Hull, North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211802]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001 the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Hull, North will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995.

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 25 per cent. of adults and 4 per cent. of children in the Yorkshire and Humberside region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Hull, North who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the following table.

Hull, North parliamentary constituency

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6.4
2002	6.8
2003	7.2
2004	7.5

Note:

Figures are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Source:

DWP Information Centre.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Hull, North, the proportion in employment has risen to 63.3 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 4,300 in Hull, North alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures for 2002–03 show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 3,400 families in Hull, North.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of October 2004, around 4,760 pensioners in Hull, North are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £39.61 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally for this year eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80 plus annual payment are available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 12.6 thousand pensioners in Hull, North have benefited from this increase.

Employment Advisers (Scotland)

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with *(a)* Ministers in the Scottish Executive, *(b)* the British Medical Association in Scotland and *(c)* the Royal College of Nursing in Scotland about the placement of employment adviser support in GPs' surgeries in Scotland. [211991]

Jane Kennedy: As my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the pre-Budget report, we will pilot the placement of employment advisers in GPs' surgeries in an area. We are currently considering potential alternative models and will actively seek to involve the relevant devolved Administrations and professional bodies in due course.

GPs play an important role in the early stages of sickness absence in certifying ill-health, in helping patients manage their health condition, giving fitness for work advice and encouraging an early return to work where possible.

New Deal (Selby)

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Selby parliamentary constituency have found work through the *(a)* New Deal for Young People, *(b)* New Deal for Disabled People, *(c)* New Deal for 25 plus and *(d)* New Deal for 50 plus. [213220]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

New Deal in Selby

	Number
New Deal for Young People	560
New Deal 25 plus	260
New Deal 50 plus	140

Notes:

1. New Deal for Young People information is from January 1998 to September 2004.

2. New Deal 25 plus information is from July 1998 to September 2004.

3. New Deal 50 plus information relates to the number of New Deal 50 plus employment credit starts up to the end of March 2003. New Deal 50 plus information is not available at constituency level after March 2003.

4. New Deal for Disabled People data are not available at constituency level.

5. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate

Outsourced Contracts (TUPE)

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advice he *(a)* gives and *(b)* has given to contractors regarding the application of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) regulations in respect of outsourced contracts

Jane Kennedy: We do not give specific advice to our contractors regarding the application of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) as they should seek their own legal advice.

We have, on some occasions, indicated whether we believe TUPE is or is not likely to apply. Where we have considered TUPE likely to apply and services were being provided by our own staff, we have supplied information regarding the staff within the undertaking and have indicated to potential contractors that we shall comply with Cabinet Office guidance (Statement of Practice on Staff Transfers in the Public Sector).

Pension Credit

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the number of people who would be entitled to pension credit if *(a)* every pensioner individual and *(b)* pensioner couple was paid the full basic state pension regardless of their contribution record. [213515]

Malcolm Wicks: It is estimated that if all people past State Pension age were paid the full basic state pension regardless of their contribution record in 2005–06 that 1.6 million individual pensioners would no longer have entitlement to pension credit. This would reduce the projected level of entitlement to pension credit from 4.8 to 3.2 million people.

Notes:

1. The figures are for Great Britain, excluding cases in residential care homes, and rounded to the nearest hundred thousand for 2005–06.

2. The change in entitlement was calculated using the Department for Work and Pensions' Policy Simulation Model for 2005–06, and based on the Family Resources Survey 2002–03.

3. The projections of entitlement are indicative only until the publication of the National Statistics estimates of Income-Related benefits.

Pensions

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people aged 54 years and over were contracted out with an appropriate personal pension or stakeholder pension into which age-related rebates were paid in the 2002–03 tax year. [213517]

Malcolm Wicks: At the end of the 2002–03 tax year there were 133,000 people aged 54 and over who qualified for an age-related rebate to be paid into their appropriate personal pensions, (including stakeholder pensions). These rebates would have been paid in the following tax year.

Source:

"Second Tier Pension Provision" published by the Department for Work and Pensions using the Lifetime Labour Market Database which uses a 1 per cent. sample of national insurance records.

Training (Rural Areas)

Sandra Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what initiatives his Department has introduced since 2001 to promote training in rural areas. [213132]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions has not introduced any initiatives since 2001 to promote training solely in rural areas. In line with Government policy, DWP ensures that customers in rural areas are not disadvantaged through the design or delivery of programmes and initiatives. The use of mobile units, outreach offices and payment of travel costs over the first £4 are examples of initiatives that help ensure people in rural communities have equality of access to information, training and services.

Unallocated Expenditure

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much of his Department's unallocated expenditure has been *(a)* spent and *(b)* carried over to the following year in each of the last five years. [213514]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) was formed in June 2001 from the Department of Social Security (DSS), the Employment Service (ES) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) were added in 2002–03. The information requested has been provided from 2001 when the Department came into existence.

All of the Department's funding is allocated over the Spending Review period with the exception of a relatively small departmental unallocated provision (DUP). The Department follows Treasury Public Spending Guidance in maintaining this contingency fund from which unforeseen demands on resources can be met. The amounts set aside for the DUP at the beginning of each year, the amounts expended during the year and the amounts carried forward to the following year are shown in the following table.

£ millions

	Unallocated provision at start of year	*Expended during year*	*Provision carried forward at the end of year*
2001–02	56	9	47
2002–03	94	0	94
2003–04	105	103	2

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211336]

Maria Eagle: The Welsh language scheme for the Department for Work and Pensions was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 13 July 2004 and has been fully operational since that date.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

China

Mr. Ian Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects a decision to be made on whether to lift the European Union's arms embargo on China. [213874]

Mr. MacShane: EU leaders discussed this issue at the European Council in December 2004. Luxembourg, as incoming EU Presidency, was invited to

> "finalise the well-advanced work in order to allow for a decision."

No date has yet been set for a decision. But as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told the Committee on Strategic Export Controls on 12 January, it is more likely than not that this will be decided under this Presidency.

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what efforts he is making to secure the arrest of indicted war criminals *(a)* Ante Gotovina, *(b)* Ratko Mladic and *(c)* Radovan Karadzic. [212016]

Mr. MacShane: The UK remains fully committed to bringing Ante Gotovina, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic to trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. Their continued presence at large is an obstacle to justice and reconciliation, and to the region's political and economic development.

The UK Government continue to pursue diplomatic, political and operational efforts to bring about the detention and transfer to The Hague of all fugitive indictees. The UK urges all the countries in the region to fulfil their international obligations, especially full co-operation with the ICTY. Failure to do so will continue to delay their progress towards closer integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. I raised the Gotovina case with President Mesic of Croatia on 27 January and the two serb indictees was discussed with Vuk Draskovic, the Foreign Minister of Serbia and Montenegro on 1 February.

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the French Government about Ante Gotovina. [212030]

Mr. MacShane: I raised the issue of Ante Gotovina with senior French officials at the UK-France summit on 18–19 November 2004.

The UK continues to work closely with all EU and international partners, e.g. the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), EUFOR, through diplomatic, political and operational efforts to bring about the detention and transfer of all fugitive indictees, including Ante Gotovina, for trial at the ICTY in The Hague. Their continued presence at large is an obstacle to justice and reconciliation, and to the region's political and economic development.

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with EU member states on the failure by Croatia to hand over indicted war criminals to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague. [212014]

Mr. MacShane: The Heads of State and Government of all 25 EU member states agreed at the December European Council that Croatia should start accession negotiations on 17 March, provided there is full co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). The UK and EU partners have also made clear that, for Croatia, full co-operation with ICTY requires all necessary steps to be taken to transfer the fugitive indictee Ante Gotovina to The Hague.

Iran

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent of the practice of the Iranian Government not to keep documentary records of complaints of ill-treatment by Baha'is to Iranian police and security services; what conclusions he has drawn; and if he will make a statement. [211284]

Mr. MacShane: We have received reports about this practice from Baha'i representatives. We judge the reports to be credible, but do not have sufficient information to assess the extent of the practice.

We have serious concerns about the situation of the Baha'i community in Iran and the approach of Iran's law enforcement forces towards religious minorities, which we have raised with the Iranian authorities on many occasions.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the threats to withdraw the protection of the law from the Baha'i community in Iran; and if he will make a statement. [211288]

Mr. MacShane: We have serious concerns about intimidation of the Baha'i community in Iran, apparently at official behest. We have discussed discrimination against the Baha'is with the Iranian authorities on many occasions, including through the EU/Iran human rights dialogue.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the UN, with particular reference to the Commission on Human Rights, concerning the position of the Baha'i community in Iran; and if he will make a statement. [211299]

Mr. MacShane: We continue to make clear at the United Nations our serious concern about the situation of the Baha'i community in Iran. In December 2004, the UK and other EU countries co-sponsored a resolution at the UN General Assembly on human rights in Iran, which expressed serious concern at the increased discrimination against the Baha'is. There was no country resolution on Iran at the Commission on Human Rights in 2004; the UK strongly supported a resolution on the elimination of all forms of religious intolerance.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran regarding its demand that Baha'is cease communal activities; and if he will make a statement. [211301]

Mr. MacShane: We have serious concerns about the situation of the Baha'i community in Iran, which we have raised with the Iranian authorities on many occasions, most recently on 24 November 2004. In December 2004, the UK and other EU countries co-sponsored a resolution on human rights in Iran at the United Nations General Assembly which expressed serious concern at, among other subjects,

> "the increased discrimination against the Baha'is, including . . . the denial of free worship or of publicly carrying out communal affairs . . . and the suspension of social, educational and community-related activities".

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate his Department has made of the size of the black market in Iraq in respect of the supply of petrol and oil for domestic use; and if he will make a statement. [207265]

Mr. MacShane: The black market in the supply of petrol and oil for domestic use in Iraq continues to be a major challenge for the Iraqi authorities. The Coalition Provisional Authority quickly took steps to stop smuggling and the black market in oil products, but much more needs to be done to identify and plug leaks in the system that have arisen as a result of a long history of smuggling under the former regime and the fact that Iraq has the cheapest petrol and petroleum products in the region. We expect the Iraqi authorities under the newly elected Government to remain committed to combating smuggling and reducing subsidies for oil products, which will go a long way to reducing the scale of the problem.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the political impact of possible under-representation of Sunnis in a future Iraqi legislature and the subsequent implications of this for the security situation in Iraq. [209033]

Mr. MacShane: Although levels of participation in the elections were impressive it is clear that terrorist violence and intimidation deterred some Iraqis from voting, particularly in Sunni areas. The Government attach great importance to an inclusive political process as the best means of isolating those seeking to undermine progress. We welcome the emphasis Iraq's political and religious leaders have put on a constitutional process which reflects the full diversity of Iraqi society and Prime Minister Allawi's call on 31 January for national dialogue that guarantees all Iraqis a voice in the next Government.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the potential for instability in Kirkuk between Kurds and Arabs. [210779]

Mr. MacShane: We are fully aware of concerns among the different communities in Kirkuk about the future of the city. Resolving these will be an important issue for Iraqis to decide in the years ahead. We will continue to encourage all communities in Kirkuk to avoid any premature action which could destabilise the situation and to pursue a peaceful, negotiated solution to outstanding disputes.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the desire among Kurds for *(a)* an independent Kurdistan and *(b)* Kurdish autonomy within a federal Iraq. [210780]

Mr. MacShane: Federalism issues, including the level of autonomy of the Kurdish regions, will be a matter for Iraqis to address in the process of drafting a new constitution once the Transitional National Assembly and Government are in place.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment has been made of the likely Kurdish participation in the forthcoming Iraqi elections. [210781]

Mr. MacShane: Although official figures for participation in the elections in Iraq are not yet available, early reports and polling evidence suggest a very high Kurdish turnout.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which the Coalition Provisional Authority complied with United Nations resolution 1483, concerning control of Iraq's oil revenues; what assessment he has made of whether those funds were independently monitored and fully accounted for; whether the auditor appointed in April 2004 has reported; and if he will make a statement. [211392]

Mr. MacShane: United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1483 of 22 May 2003 called for Iraq's oil revenues to be used in a transparent manner for purposes benefiting the Iraqi people, and export sales of petroleum and petroleum products to be made consistent with international market best practice. An International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) was also established to ensure the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) was used in a transparent manner for the purposes set out in UNSCR 1483.

On 14 December 2004 the IAMB released its report covering Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) management of the DFI from 22 May 2003 to the end of occupation on 28 June 2004. This was based on two audit reports to the IAMB prepared by the external auditor (KPMG). Reports are available on the IAMB's website at www.iamb.info.

Both audit reports conclude that, with the exception of smuggling, "the DFI Statement of Cash Receipts and Payment presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts and payments of the DFI". The IAMB report recognises that

> "all known oil proceeds, reported frozen assets, and transfers from the Oil-for-Food Programme have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DPI".

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations for *(a)* the winding up of the UN Compensation Commission as soon as the new Iraqi Government is formed and *(b)* the return of all unspent monies to the new Iraqi Government. [211837]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 2 February 2005]*: The UK recognises the importance of the compensation issue to Iraq but also to those individuals, States, and corporations with outstanding claims. Under UN Security Council Resolution 1483, Iraqi payments to the United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC) can be changed only by a decision of a sovereign Iraqi Government and of the UNCC Governing Council.

Middle East (London Conference)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* countries and *(b)* organisations will be represented at the forthcoming London conference on the Middle East peace process in March; at what level they will be represented; and if he will make a statement. [211951]

Mr. Alexander: We are inviting members of the Quartet (UN, EU, US and Russia), the G8 and those who play a significant role in the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and the International Task Force for Palestinian Reform to the London Meeting on 1 March. We envisage they will be represented at Foreign Minister level.

The London Meeting aims to support the new Palestinian leadership in strengthening Palestinian institutions and to make the most of this window of opportunity. More effective institutions are required by the Roadmap and are essential for a future Palestinian state. The London Meeting will provide an opportunity for the new Palestinian leadership to showcase their successes so far on state-building issues and their future plans to build a government with local and international credibility. The meeting is designed to build upon and complement existing work being done by the World Bank, the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, the Quartet, the

Task Force on Palestinian Reform and others. The meeting will cover issues relating to economic reform, good governance and security.

Pakistan

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs for what reasons the Unilateral Statement by the European Community on competence division was included in the Co-operation Agreement between the Community and Pakistan set out on page 36 of OJ L 378 volume 47 of 23 December 2004. [211427]

Mr. MacShane: The Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the Community and Pakistan is based on Articles 133, 181, in conjunction with the first sentence of Article 300(2) and the first subparagraph of Article 300(3) of the treaty establishing the European Community. The Final Act of the Agreement contains a Joint Declaration by the European Community and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan whereby the Islamic Republic of Pakistan undertakes to conclude readmission agreements with the member states of the European Union which so request. Such agreements are provided for in the last paragraph of Article 63 of the treaty but they fall within the competence of member states, ie outside the scope of the treaty.

The Unilateral Statement on the division of competences, contained in the Final Act, makes clear that the inclusion of the Joint Declaration on readmission does not prejudice the division of competences between the European Community and the member states on the issue of readmission.

Palestine

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment his Department has made of the deployment of Palestinian police in Southern Gaza on 26 January; what assessment his Department has made of the impact that this deployment will have on the peace process; and if he will make a statement; [212158]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the Palestinian authority and (ii) the Government of Israel on the deployment of Palestinian police in Southern Gaza; and if he will make a statement; [212159]

(3) what *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind (i) his Department, (ii) the UK Government and (iii) the EU have (A) offered and (B) delivered to the Palestinian Authority for the deployment of Palestinian police (1) in Southern Gaza, (2) Gaza as a whole and (3) the West Bank; and if he will make a statement. [212173]

Mr. Alexander: We welcome the deployment of Palestinian police which began in Northern Gaza on 21 January, and Southern Gaza on 26 January, as the latest in a series of positive steps by the new Palestinian leadership. We also welcome the Israeli reaction to the measures taken by the Palestinian Authority, which has been positive and helpful. We hope that both parties can continue to move forward and make progress on getting back to the Roadmap.

We have been in regular discussion with the Israeli and Palestinian leadership on security matters and will continue this contact. The UK Government have also been working for some time with the Palestinian Authority to improve security apparatus in Gaza and West Bank, through technical assistance and provision of equipment. We are working, through the Department for International Development, with the Palestinian Civil Police. And we are working with European Union partners on a significant assistance project for Palestinian civil policing.

The London Meeting on 1 March will be the next stage in the process of exploring how we and the international community can help the Palestinian Authority develop a more effective security apparatus and work towards building the institutions of a future Palestinian state. Stronger institutions will help the Palestinian Authority take over more successfully the territories from which Israel will withdraw in the context of the disengagement plan. They will also ensure that disengagement can hasten a return to the Roadmap.

Small Grants Scheme

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list, for each country where it has been utilised over the last two years, the grants made from the Small Grants Scheme; and what the *(a)* amount and *(b)* purpose of each grant was. [211102]

Mr. MacShane: Funds totalling £12.1 million in 2002–03 financial year and £10.2 million in 2003–04 financial year have been dispersed on projects in over 100 countries under the Small Grants Scheme. I have placed a list of the Small Grants Scheme spend 2002 to 2004 by country in the Library of the House. The Department for International Development funds the scheme. Funds are made available to civil society and religious organisations for activities that promote the development or maintain the economy of a territory outside the United Kingdom, or the welfare of its people. A breakdown of each project is not held centrally by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Srebrenica Massacres

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he is making to mark the 10th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacres; and if he will make a statement. [212028]

Mr. MacShane: We have yet to take any final decisions on the most appropriate way to mark this important anniversary. The UK already provides public, operational and financial support to a number of projects which will leave a lasting memorial to the victims of these crimes, including the establishment of the purpose-built Potocari cemetery outside Srebrenica and the creation of a memorial room with the support of the Imperial War Museum.

The best tribute to the victims of this crime would be to bring the perpetrators to justice. The UK will continue to be at the forefront of political, diplomatic and—through EUFOR in Bosnia—operational efforts to ensure that those indicted for war crimes, in particular Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic and Ante Gotovina, are brought to trial in The Hague.

Tsunami Relief

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what changes to the allocation of *(a)* resources and *(b)* funds his Department has had to make as a consequence of the tsunami disaster. [210581]

Mr. MacShane: As soon as the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) received news of the tsunami disaster it activated its emergency crisis plan that deals with major emergencies involving British nationals overseas. Under this plan, posts in the affected region were reinforced with trained consular staff both from London and other regional posts.

Between 26 December and 24 January, the FCO sent a total of 105 extra staff to Thailand. As of 24 January, 51 of these extra staff remained in Thailand. 27 were supporting the embassy in Bangkok and 24 were manning the temporary mission in Phuket. On 26 December, a rapid deployment team of 10 FCO staff was sent out from London to the high commission in Colombo. A further eight team members were deployed between 28 and 30 December. As of 24 January, one member of this team remained in Sri Lanka.

In London, a tsunami crisis unit of 16 full-time staff providing 24 hour cover has been in operation. FCO staff have also been deployed to the Casualty Bureau in Hendon and, for a period of 10 days, to Heathrow airport.

It is far from clear as yet what the total financial cost of the consular operation will be but it will almost certainly exceed that of any recent consular crisis. The cost includes the deployment of police officers to the affected region for family liaison and forensic investigation. We expect some tsunami-related activity to continue into the next financial year.

Since October 2003 a proportion of each UK passport fee has gone towards establishing an Emergency and Disaster Reserve (EDR) which is controlled jointly by the FCO and Her Majesty's Treasury. By the end of financial year 2004–05, allowing for previous non-tsunami claims yet to be paid, there will be roughly £5 million in the EDR which we hope will be sufficient to cover the majority of the 2004–05 claim. In the event that total claims exceed the capacity of the EDR, we will need to consider how best to meet that cost, including by seeking access to the Resource Departmental Expenditure Limits Reserve.

Turkey

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Turkish Government on political prisoners being held in Turkey; how many political prisoners are being held in custody by the Turkish authorities; and if he will make a statement. [211050]

Mr. MacShane: Estimates of those in detention for political offences vary. The recent release of many prisoners in Turkey, as a result of the new Turkish Penal Code, has made estimation even harder. However, according to the Turkish Ministry of Justice there are currently 3,757 individuals detained for "political offences". This figure includes those convicted under the Anti-Terror Law, and Articles 125, 146, 168, 169 of the current Turkish Penal Code.

The UK has made clear to the Turkish authorities that European values do not permit detention of citizens on account of their political beliefs. A package of constitutional amendments was adopted by Turkey in May 2004 that included affirmation that international human rights agreements take precedence over domestic law. The European Commission's 2004 regular report on Turkey noted that the

> "courts have continued to apply the reforms"

and that as a result

> "the situation of people sentenced for non-violent expression of opinion is now being addressed".

Ukraine

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on discussions his Department has had with the Ukraine Government on EU membership. [211987]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 2 February 2005]:* We have had numerous discussions at different levels both bilaterally and through the EU Troika with the Ukrainians on strengthening EU-Ukraine relations and on President Yushchenko's long-term strategic goal of EU membership. I also discussed these issues with senior Ukrainian officials who are expected to take up ministerial posts when I represented the United Kingdom at President Yushchenko's inauguration in Kiev on 23 January.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Accidents

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* accident and emergency admissions and *(b)* ambulance call-outs resulting from incidents occurring (i) on and (ii) in the vicinity of premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises under the Licensing Act 1964 there were in the last period for which figures are available. [212061]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of accident and emergency attendances that are alcohol related is not collected centrally. There were 24,845 admissions via accident and emergency to national health service hospitals in England for alcohol-related conditions during 2003–04.

Information on the number of alcohol-related ambulance call-outs is not collected centrally.

Alzheimer's

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Alzheimer's disease patients are being treated in West Derbyshire; what the total spending on drugs to treat Alzheimer's disease was in West Derbyshire in each of the last three years; what assessment he has made of the availability of drugs for moderately-severe to severe Alzheimer's disease in West Derbyshire; how much was spent by the NHS on drug treatments for advanced Alzheimer's disease patients in West Derbyshire in each of the last three years; and what measures have been taken to assist carers of patients with advanced Alzheimer's disease in West Derbyshire. [211915]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not collected in the format requested. Drugs used for dementia as defined in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.11 are specifically indicated for use in dementia in Alzheimer's sufferers. The table shows the number of prescription items and net ingredient cost of all drugs used for dementia in Alzheimer's disease that were dispensed in the community in primary care trusts (PCTs) in the Derbyshire area in 2001, 2002 and 2003. It is not possible to provide information on any other prescription drugs that patients with Alzheimer's disease may receive, since information is not available on the reasons why a prescription drug is prescribed.

The information covers prescriptions that are dispensed in the community only. It does not include items dispensed in hospitals or mental health trusts where they are known to be used significantly. Prescribing practices of drugs for dementia will vary across PCTs.

Number of prescription items and net ingredient cost of all drugs for dementia that were dispensed in the community in PCTs in West Derbyshire and in England—2001, 2002 and 2003

	Number of prescription items (000)			*Net ingredient cost (£000)*		
	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Amber Valley PCT	0.3	0.7	0.9	21.8	59.0	73.1
Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT	0.2	0.4	0.6	13.3	33.7	49.1
High Peak and Dales PCT	0.6	1.0	1.5	38.0	65.6	106.7
Total West Derbyshire	1.0	2.1	3.0	73.0	158.3	228.9
England	122.1	231.3	358.2	11,004.6	20,567.1	31,347.5

Notes on prescribing data:

1. PCA data cover all prescription items that are dispensed in the community in England, (this covers items dispensed by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered.

PCA data do not include items dispensed in hospitals/mental health trusts or private prescriptions. PCA data includes the PCT in which the drug for dementia was dispensed in.

2. Drugs for dementia are defined in the British National Formulary (BNF) section 4.11 "Drugs for dementia" and include donepezil hydrochloride (Aricept), galantamine (Reminyl), memantine hydrochloride (Ebixa) and rivastigmine (Exelon).

3. Doctors, dentists or nurses write prescriptions on a prescription form. Each single item written on the form is counted as a prescription item.

4. Net ingredient cost refers to the basic cost (which the dispenser is reimbursed) of the drug before discounts and does not include any dispensing costs or fees.

Source:

Prescription cost analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority.

With respect to the cost of drug treatments for patients with advanced Alzheimer's disease, according to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) records, there is one licensed product, Ebixa (memantine hydrochloride), which is indicated for the treatment of patients with moderately-severe to severe Alzheimer's disease.

Ebixa was first dispensed in the community on prescription in the last quarter (October to December) of 2002, so data prior to that are not available. The PCA data report that in 2003, around 7,600 prescription items of Ebixa were dispensed in the community in England with a net ingredient cost of 636,300, or two per cent, of the cost of all dementia drugs. Due to reasons of confidentiality, the Department does not release sub-national level prescription data where less than 50 items of a drug have been dispensed. Data on the cost of Ebixa in the Derbyshire area cannot be provided as the numbers were too small to be disclosed.

Both the Derbyshire Mental health services national health service trust and the PCTs in West Derbyshire confirm that they follow National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) appraisal guidance relating to the use of Donepezil, Rivastigmine, and Galantamine [guidance no. 19] for the treatment of patients with Alzheimer's disease.

NICE is currently reviewing this guidance, which will include an assessment of Ebixa. In the meantime, PCTs and individual trusts, when considering the funding of this treatment, are expected to use their existing prescribing arrangements and consider all the evidence available to them on the clinical effectiveness of the treatment.

NICE has not yet completed its revision of guidance No. 19 with regard to the drug Memantine, which is indicated for patients with severe Alzheimer's disease. It is a matter for individual PCTs and NHS trusts to consider whether this drug be made available in the interim period.

In terms of measures taken to assist carers of patients with advanced Alzheimer's disease in West Derbyshire, Derbyshire Dales Crossroads receives a combined amount of £95,000 per annum from:

High Peak and the Dales PCT

Derbyshire Dales and South Derbyshire PCT

Social services

Crossroads is a national organisation committed to providing practical support—where it is most needed—in the home. Trained care staff go into carers' homes to take over the caring tasks, giving carers a much needed break.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* instructions and *(b)* policy guidelines on proposed mergers of ambulance services have been given by his Department to health authorities. [211629]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No specific guidance has been issued to the national health service on proposed mergers of ambulance services.

However, under section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, NHS bodies are under a duty to consult and involve patients, the public and their representatives in the planning of changes to services and to involve them in decisions affecting the operation of services. Should a proposal to change services represent a substantial development or variation, NHS bodies are under a duty to consult relevant local authority overview and scrutiny committees.

Once the results of these consultations are known, if the trust boards and strategic health authority agree that a merger should take place, they are required to write to the Secretary of State for Health asking that the Department take action to merge the organisations. If that request is approved by Ministers, an order will be drawn up dissolving the organisations in question and creating a replacement organisation.

There are no set standards for what the Secretary of State would take into account when considering a request to merge NHS organisations. But as a general rule, before approving the merger of any NHS trusts, the Secretary of State would seek to satisfy himself that:

appropriate consultation has been undertaken locally;

any organisational changes are in the interests of patients and staff; and

the merger will help improve performance against the requirements and standards set out in National Standards, Local Action and other relevant documents.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the merging of ambulance services. [211630]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Any decisions around the configuration of ambulance trusts are a matter for the local health economy to consider, led by the strategic health authority (SHA) and in consultation with patients and the public. Under section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, national health service bodies are under a duty to consult and involve patients, the public and their representatives in the planning of changes to services and to involve them in decisions affecting the operation of services. Should a proposal to change services represent a substantial development or variation, NHS bodies are under a duty to consult relevant local authority overview and scrutiny committees.

It is appropriate for SHAs and commissioners to examine how ambulance services are provided in their area and consider whether the current arrangements could be improved to benefit patients and staff, reduce duplication and improve efficiency.

Chiropody Services

Dame Marion Roe: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer of 18 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 675, on chiropody services, when the guidance on the provision of podiatry services contained in the report of the joint Department of Health and NHS Chiropody Task Force, Feet First, was discontinued. [211370]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* Feet First was published in 1994 and replaced statutory eligibility criteria from that date. The NHS Plan, published in July 2000, superseded this guidance.

Conquest Hospital

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what changes have been made involving direct admission of children to the paediatric department rather than the accident and emergency department at the Conquest Hospital in East Sussex. [210213]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of "Shifting the Balance of Power", it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services for local people.

An ambulatory service at the Conquest Hospital operates seven days a week from 8 am to 8 pm. This service has been up and running for quite some time. Specially trained nurses and doctors assess and treat children without the need for them to be admitted. The children can go home supported by specially trained community nurses and the reassurance that help and advice is just a phone call away.

Children attending accident and emergency with medical conditions during the above hours are referred straight to the ambulatory service on the children's unit. Children's trauma is dealt with in A and E and those children requiring admission are admitted to the children's ward in the normal manner.

Dementia

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people living in the Greater London area have been diagnosed as suffering from dementia. [214388]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not held centrally.

Dentistry

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists in Stoke-on-Trent have signed up for the new dental contract. [210855]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In Stoke-on-Trent, three dental practices have applied to move to the personal dental service (PDS) contract. One of those practices, consisting of four dentists, started working under the new arrangements in August 2004. A further two practices are expected to join the scheme in February 2005.

We are committed to introducing new contractual arrangements, involving the delegation of the commissioning of national health service dentistry to primary care trusts, not later than April 2006. Dentists who wish to have advanced benefit of these new arrangements may move to the PDS contract.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* principal and *(b)* assistant dentists offered NHS treatment in the strategic health authority of Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire in each year since 1997. [212013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the numbers of dentists in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority area for the years 1997 to 2004.

	General dental service (GDS) principal	*GDS assistant*	*Personal dental service (PDS) provider*	*PDS performer*	*Total*
1997	756	60	—	—	816
1998	805	60	—	—	865
1999	814	77	—	—	891
2000	825	72	21	—	918
2001	813	74	30	1	918
2002	799	80	37	1	917
2003	809	73	42	—	924
2004	816	85	71	1	973

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what aspects of the implementation of the new contract for NHS dentists have led to the delay in the transfer of responsibility for dental services to primary care trusts. [210235]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer the hon. Member the written ministerial statement on national health service dentistry reforms made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 6–8WS.

Diamorphine

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on recent interruptions in the supply of diamorphine. [210221]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Immediately before Christmas, Chiron, the major supplier of diamorphine injection in the United Kingdom, informed the Department that its supplies of this product were limited. It is unlikely that the company will be able to supply more for some months. The other supplier, Wockhardt UK, continues to produce diamorphine and has increased its production. The Department and the National Health Service Purchasing and Supply Agency are working closely with manufacturers of alternative medicines to ensure that patients receive the care they need. They are monitoring the position very closely until the supply of diamorphine returns to normal and will be taking whatever action is necessary to secure the supply of alternative medicines for the management of pain.

Enbrel

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in each primary care trust are receiving Enbrel on NHS prescription for juvenile arthritis. [213204]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold information on the number of people receiving drugs on prescription or the reasons for which a drug is prescribed.

Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will receive a delegation comprising the hon. Member for Gosport and leaders of the main party political groups in Gosport to discuss the recommendation by the Hampshire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee that the current proposals of the Fareham and Gosport Primary Care Trust be referred to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. [213508]

Mr. Hutton: Yes.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207831]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given by the Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, my hon. Friend the Member for Shipley (Mr. Leslie), on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Health Funding (Cambridgeshire)

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* grant levels calculated on the capitation formula basis and *(b)* amount of grant paid to (i) the East Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust and (ii) the Fenland Primary Care Trust (A) were in each year before the merger of the trusts and (B) have been in each year since the merger. [213128]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 1 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 408W.

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which trusts amalgamated to form the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust; when amalgamation took place; what grant payments were made to each trust in the three years prior to amalgamation; what the grant payment has been made to the amalgamated trust in each year since inception; and what the budget deficit of the amalgamated trust at inception was. [213213]

Dr. Ladyman: The creation of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust was as a result of the merger of Lifespan national health service trust and North West Anglian Healthcare NHS Trust. The new trust came into effect on 1 April 2002, in line with Statutory Instrument 2002 No. 1690.

Information relating to grants payable to NHS trusts are not held centrally.

I am advised that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Trust did not inherit any deficit from its predecessor bodies. Surpluses were reported in both 2003–04 and 2004–05; these were carried forward to the next financial year to assist the trust in managing its financial position.

MRI Scans

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the waiting times for MRI scans in Coventry were for the latest period for which figures are available. [213486]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not held centrally.

National Service Framework for Older People

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the standard on medicine review in the National Service Framework for Older People is reconciled with the standard in the general practitioner contract; and what data he collects in respect of each standard. [208175]

Dr. Ladyman: The quality and outcomes framework (QOF) indicator for medication reviews for people prescribed repeat medicines was developed by a group of independent experts who were commissioned by the British Medical Association and the NHS Confederation. The group developed QOF indicators using its own search of the evidence and did not necessarily use existing national service framework (NSF) standards. Although this means that the QOF indicators and NSF standards may not match entirely, meeting the QOF indicator will go a long way to helping practices meet the NSF standard and vice versa.

Data on whether practices have achieved the QOF indicator are collected through the quality and management analysis system. This is currently only available to primary care trusts.

Compliance with NSFs is monitored through clinical governance arrangements and independent inspection by the Commission for Healthcare Audit and Inspection.

NHS Modernisation Agency

Richard Younger-Ross: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what it has cost *(a)* to create and *(b)* to run (i) the NHS University and (ii) the NHS Modernisation Agency; and what the Modernisation Agency achieved during its existence. [207716]

Mr. Hutton: There were no specific additional costs associated with the creation of the NHS University (NHSU) and the Modernisation Agency (MA). The operating costs for these bodies for 2003–04 were set out in the document, "Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies", published in July 2004.

The NHSU has provided thousands of national health service staff with access to training and development programmes. For the period 16 July 2003 to 11 January 2005, there have been 41,008 staff enrolments onto NHSU programmes. The MA has engaged at least 150,000 NHS staff in several thousand improvement projects, benefiting patients in many aspects of health care in England.

Some of the functions of the NHSU and the MA will be brought together in the NHS Institute for Learning, Skills and Innovation, so that these achievements can be built on in a more integrated way.

NHS Staff (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital consultants are employed in Coventry. [213488]

Dr. Ladyman: At June 2004 there were 228 consultants working at University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire National Health Service Trust. This is an increase of 16 since September 2003 and 102 since September 1997.

Nurse Numbers

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* nurses, *(b)* health visitors, *(c)* practice nurses and *(d)* school nurses were employed (i) in England and (ii) in Northampton in (1) 1997 and (2) 2004. [211701]

Mr. Hutton: The number of nurses, health visitors and practice nurses employed in England and in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic Health Authority (SHA) in 1997 and 2003, the latest year for which data are available, is shown in the table.

The Government collected information on the school nursing work force in the September 2003 non-medical work force census, but this information was incomplete. Information on the number of school nurses employed in the national health service will be available from the September 2004 non-medical work force census, expected to be published in March 2005.

All NHS qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff, including practice nurses employed by unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1] in England and Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA area as at 30 September[2] each year

Headcount

	1997	*2003*
England		
All qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	318,856	386,359
of which:		
Health visitors	12,410	12,984
School nurses[3]	n/a	476
Practice nurses	18,389	21,667
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA area		
All qualified nurses (including practice nurses)	8,626	9,589
of which:		
Health visitors	364	318
School nurses[3]	n/a	2
Practice nurses	522	548

n/a = not applicable

[1] UPEs include general medical service (QMS) unrestricted principals, personal medical service (PMS) contracted general practitioners and PMS salaried GPs.

[2] Practice nurse figures as at 1 October for 1997.

[3] School nurses were identified separately for the first time in the 2003 Census so these figures may not represent a complete data set.

Source:

Department of Health non-medical workforce census

Department of Health QMS and PMS statistics.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213558]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department and its Executive agencies has no residential properties on its estate.

Paddington Health Campus

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list meetings which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department have had within the last six months to discuss the Paddington Health Campus; and with whom each meeting was held in each case. [210637]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* In the past six months, I have had three meetings about the Paddington Health Campus scheme.

On 17 January 2005, I met with my hon. Friend the Member for Regent's Park and Kensington, North (Ms Buck), Jo Heggarty (Chair, Westminster Primary Care Trust), and Peter Coates (Department of Health).

On 11 January 2005, I met with Caro Millington (Chair, North West London Strategic Health Authority), Baroness Joan Hanham (Chair, St. Mary's Hospital Trust), Lord Tony Newton (Chair, Royal Brompton and Harefield Hospital Trust), Professor Sir Leszek Brysiewitcz (Deputy Rector of Imperial College), and Peter Coates (Department of Health).

On 19 July 2004, I met with my hon. Friend the Member for Regent's Park and Kensington, North (Ms Buck), the hon. Member for Cities of London and Westminster (Mr. Field), Helen Jones (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), and Jane Everton (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister).

John Bacon, Group Director of Health and Social Care Services Delivery had a meeting about the Paddington Health Campus scheme.

On 11 August 2004, he met with Nick Searl Project Director, Chelsfield Construction, Howard Wright Project Director, Chelsfield Construction, John Anderson Director of Chelsfield Construction, and Steve Peacock Acting Chief Executive of North West London Strategic Health Authority.

In the same period, there have been a considerable number of meetings between officials and officials with representatives from the trusts, other advisors, the private sector parties so far involved in the project, officials from Westminster city council and other interested parties. Details of all these appointments have been placed in the Library.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate he has made of how many people in England suffer from *(a)* arthritis, *(b)* multiple sclerosis, *(c)* asthma and *(d)* mental illness; and how many of each are exempt from prescription charging; [211532]

(2) how many people in England are undergoing chemotherapy treatment; and how many of these are exempt from prescription charging. [211533]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answers 31 January 2005]:* The Department does not centrally hold the information requested on the number of people suffering from arthritis, multiple sclerosis, asthma or mental illness. The Department does not centrally hold information on the number of people undergoing chemotherapy treatment.

None of the mentioned medical conditions or chemotherapy treatment are included in the list of medical conditions giving exemption from prescription charges.

Safety of Medicines

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers the Medicines and Health Care products Regulatory Agency has to compel drug companies to provide the Department with all of their clinical trial data when drug licences are being sought. [213340]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Drug companies are obliged by Directive 2001/83/EC, to supply to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), all relevant information on clinical trials for the evaluation of the product in support of a marketing authorisation application (MAA). The MHRA has systematic controls in place to ensure that the data submitted by an applicant in support of a MAA comply with the requirements of the directive and the relevant guidelines. It is a criminal offence not to comply with these requirements of the directive.

Ann Clwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how regularly his Department reviews the role of *(a)* the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and *(b)* the Committee on the Safety of Medicines. [213345]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The full range of operations of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have been reviewed regularly. Most recently, for example, a value-for-money audit was conducted by the National Audit Office. Its findings were represented in January 2003. This was followed up by a Public Accounts Committee report in June 2003.

There are no formal arrangements for review of the Committee on the safety of Medicines (CSM), but in February 2004, the Government asked the MHRA to launch a public consultation on proposals to review the structure of the Medicines Act advisory bodies, including the CSM, to reflect the changes in the regulatory framework that have taken place in recent years. The Government are taking forward the results of this consultation and changes to the structure of the advisory bodies will be introduced in the autumn of 2005.

The Minister responsible, the Under-Secretary of State (Lord Warner), has regular meetings with the chairman and chief executive to review progress on their annual work plan and holds an annual accountability meeting with them.

Salt

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether patients with kidney disease are made aware of the importance of seeking medical advice about their daily salt intake levels. [213116]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework for renal services, part 1 makes clear that all people with established renal failure need to receive nutritional monitoring and dietary advice, including restrictions on potassium, phosphate and sodium.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the health risks to patients on dialysis of failing to monitor sodium intake levels. [213117]

Ms Rosie Winterton: People receiving dialysis will normally be on a low sodium diet. Standards 2 and 4 of the national service framework for renal services, part 1, published in January 2004, identify the need for people to receive nutritional monitoring and dietary advice, as well as the continuing management of their underlying disease and the risk factors and complications.

Secure Psychiatric Beds

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many secure psychiatric beds have been available in each of the last eight years. [210218]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[pursuant to the reply, 27 January 2005, Official Report, c. 562W]:* I regret that a figure in the table in my previous reply is incorrect.

The average daily number of available beds for 1996–97 should read 1,575 not 1,1575 as printed.

This was due to a clerical error which was not picked up in the type-checking.

Social Services (Care Costs)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance he has issued to social services departments on costs which must be taken into account when deciding weekly rates for care homes; and whether this includes a recommended minimum hourly rate of pay. [213138]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department does not set pay rates for staff in care homes. Care homes are private businesses and owners take their own decision about how to conduct their business. This includes negotiating the level of pay and conditions of services for staff, taking into account local employment conditions such as recruitment and retention. However, like any other employer care home owners must operate within the requirements of general employment legislation such as the national minimum wage. In addition, fee setting by social services departments must take into account the legitimate current and future costs faced by providers.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed by each of the strategic health authorities in England; what the running costs of each authority were in the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the future of the strategic health authorities. [203825]

Mr. Hutton: At present, there are no current plans for changes to strategic health authorities (SHAs).

The total number of staff, including medical staff, employed by SHAs in September 2003 was 3,663 (3,375 whole time equivalents)[1]. Around 1,660 were engaged in core SHA functions[2]. The rest ran deaneries, workforce development confederations and other functions[3] on behalf of SHAs.

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[1] Source for total number of staff: Department of Health non-medical workforce census and medical and dental workforce census.

[2] Source for core staff: internal validation exercise. Core staff are SHA employees funded by the Department of Health cash limit.

[3] In addition to the core staff shown in table 1, further staff are employed to provide common/shared services for the national health service, workforce development confederations, cancer teams and deaneries.

The number of core staff employed in each SHA is shown in table 1.

Table 1

Reference	*Strategic health authority*	*Core staff*
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	63
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	54
Q03	Essex	60
Q04	North West London	66
Q05	North Central London	57
Q06	North East London	47
Q07	South East London	77
Q08	South West London	39
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	66
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	70
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	51
Q12	West Yorkshire	57
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	56
Q14	Greater Manchester	49
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside	60
Q16	Thames Valley	54
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	76
Q18	Kent and Medway	84
Q19	Surrey and Sussex	49
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	64
Q21	South West Peninsula	60
Q22	Dorset and Somerset	53
Q23	South Yorkshire	58
Q24	Trent	55
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	56
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire	59
Q27	Birmingham and The Black Country	48
Q28	West Midlands	72
Total		1,660

Running cost budgets for SHAs in 2004–05 are shown in table 2.

Table 2

£000

Strategic health authority	*2004–05 resource allocation*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	5,101
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	4,572
Essex	5,466
North West London	4,581
North Central London	4,479
North East London	4,791
South East London	4,577
South West London	4,581
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	4,532
County Durham and Tees Valley	5,074
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	4,533
West Yorkshire	5,086
Cumbria and Lancashire	4,581
Greater Manchester	5,106
Cheshire and Merseyside	5,110
Thames Valley	5,101
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	4,524
Kent and Medway	4,962
Surrey and Sussex	5,057
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	5,073
South West Peninsula	4,563
Dorset and Somerset	5,232
South Yorkshire	4,873
Trent	4,783
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	5,288
Shropshire and Staffordshire	4,798
Birmingham and the Black Country	6,094
West Midlands South (Coventry, Warwickshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire)	4,553
Total	137,072

Swale Primary Care Trust

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Swale Primary Care Trust has allocated to the crisis resolution teams for *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [211769]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Any decisions on the range of primary care services to be made available in local areas are prioritised and led by primary care trusts (PCTs). This is in line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, which is now reinforced by financial allocations to PCTs. In this way we are putting resources in the hands of the front line of the national health service alongside their responsibilities for developing and running services.

Between 2003–04 and 2005–06, Swale PCT will receive an increase in funding in excess of £23 million (32 per cent.). The allocations policy for 2003–04 to 2005–06 is based on moving all PCTs progressively closer to their target allocation. Swale PCT received above average growth in each of these years.

I am informed that Swale PCT has for the year 2004–05 budgeted for £200,000 for the crisis resolution health team (CRHT), rising to £350,000 for 2005–06. The CRHT has now started to see patients and is expected to be at full strength by the end of March 2005.

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funds he will allocate to mental health treatment in Swale primary care trust for *(a)* children and *(b)* those over 60 years in the next financial year. [211770]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Any decisions on the range of primary care services to be made available in local areas are prioritised and led by primary care trusts (PCTs). This is in line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, which is now reinforced by financial allocations to PCTs. In this way, we are putting resources in the hands of the front line of the national health service alongside their responsibilities for developing and running services.

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In the three years to March 2006, the Government are investing over £300 million in the development of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) provided by the NHS and local authorities. This is additional to their spending on CAMHS funded by general allocations. The total level of expenditure in 2005–06 is a matter for local decision. In 2005–06, the Department will be allocating an additional £97,000 to Swale PCT and £1.7 million to Kent county council. This funding will help to achieve the Department's public service agreement standard of a comprehensive CAMHS in every area by 2006.

Walsgrave Hospital

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital beds are available in the emergency admissions unit at Walsgrave hospital, Coventry. [213489]

Dr. Ladyman: West Midlands South strategic health authority reports that the emergency admissions unit at Walsgrave hospital has a triage room for ambulant patients, two 'see and treat' cubicles for patients that can be seen quickly and who need little or no treatment, nine minor injuries cubicles, eleven major injuries cubicles, and a procedure room.

In addition, there are twelve beds in a medical assessment unit, where patients with medical presentations who need a more in-depth assessment (which may take longer than four hours) are seen; 17 beds in an observation unit, where patients who need a period of observation for longer than four hours, or where the nature of the tests required as part of the assessment process take longer than four hours to complete, are admitted; five beds in a resuscitation bay area; a four bay dedicated paediatric area; and four beds, two trolleys and two consulting rooms in a surgical assessment unit.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 4 February 2005

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Bottled Water

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to his answer of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 247, on bottled water, (1) what proportion of glass from bottles containing drinking water which is on sale in parliamentary canteens or provided by House of Commons Departments for hon. Members' use was *(a)* recycled and *(b)* sent for disposal in landfill sites in the most recent year for which figures are available; [214172]

(2) what the estimated cost has been to Departments of the House in providing bottles of water in each year since 1997. [214173]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: All water bottles disposed of from the Refreshment Department's restaurants, bars and banqueting rooms in the Palace of Westminster are recycled, as are the bottles purchased from the Refreshment Department by the Serjeant at Arms Department for use in Westminster Hall, Committee and other meeting rooms in the Palace. Glass water bottles sold in the self-service cafeterias are not currently recycled, as most of these are bought by customers for consumption elsewhere, and there are no recycling facilities for empty bottles in the other buildings on the Parliamentary Estate; the re-cycling of glass bottles from these areas is being actively pursued. The Refreshment Department estimates that approximately 50 per cent. of its total purchases of water bottles are recycled. None are sent for disposal in landfill sites.

The House of Commons Refreshment Department purchased bottled water to the following values in each year since 2000–01:

	£
2000–01	33,193
2001–02	37,762
2002–03	52,141
2003–04	53,897
2004–05	[1]45,926

[1] Year to date

Note:

No figures are available for previous years.

The House of Commons Refreshment Department sells bottled water through its dining rooms, cafeterias and bars. The estimated gross profit on these sales over the past 12 months is around £57,000.

The Serjeant at Arms Department purchases its bottled water through the House of Commons Refreshment Department; its costs are therefore included within those given in the table for the Refreshment Department. Of these totals, purchases of bottled water by the Serjeant at Arms Department are estimated at the following values in each year since 2001–02:

	£
2001–02	5,464
2002–03	7,714
2003–04	11,530
2004–05	[1]10,100

[1] Year to date.

Note:

No figures are available for previous years.

CABINET OFFICE

Civil Contingencies

Andrew George: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister in respect of the budget settlement for each responsible authority and the ability of each to fulfil its legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. [214232]

Mr. Miliband: The Cabinet Office and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have regular discussions on a range of issues, including the distribution of civil protection funding for local authorities.

Andrew George: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what assessment he has made of the ability of the Council of the Isles of Scilly of the ability to fulfil its *(a)* legal duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and *(b)* other emergency service responsibilities. [214233]

Mr. Miliband: The Government assessed civil protection funding for local authorities collectively as part of Spending Review 2004, and agreed a level of funding with the Local Government Association to reflect the aggregate civil protection responsibilities across all local authorities. The Government's contribution to local authorities' civil protection work will be paid for via the mainstream Revenue Support Grant from 2005–06. This funding is not ring-fenced, and it is a matter for individual local authorities to determine how they use the overall formula grant allocation to achieve the outcomes required by legislation.

Andrew George: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what discussions he has had with the council of the Isles of Scilly in respect of its ability to fulfil its legal duties to meet the requirements of *(a)* the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and *(b)* other civil emergency responsibilities. [214257]

Mr. Miliband: Throughout the development of the Civil Contingencies Act and supporting regulations and guidance, the Government have maintained a close dialogue with local authorities. In respect of some matters, most notably funding, the Government have sought the views of authorities through the Local Government Association. More generally, the Government have sought the views of individual local authorities through three public consultations.

In addition, the Government Office of the South West regularly discusses civil protection matters with local authorities across the region, including the Council of the Isles of Scilly.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Contracts

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many contracts were awarded by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible to small and medium-sized enterprises in each year since 2001–02; and what the total value of those contracts was in each year. [207010]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally and for the financial year 2001–02, the Department placed 13,647 contracts and purchase orders worth £105 million with companies employing less than 249 employees; in 2002–03 the figures were 7,788 and £59 million respectively; and in 2003–04 the figures were 7,008 and £54 million respectively.

Information on Defra's agencies and NDPBs is not held centrally.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many contracts in her Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if she will make a statement. [211612]

Alun Michael: From information held centrally, I am not aware of any contracts let by the Department to EDS or Fujitsu over the last two years other than assignments under the overall Fujitsu Software Maintenance Services Contract. Information on Defra's Executive Agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies is not held centrally.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on *(a)* indoor bought plants, *(b)* indoor hired plants, *(c)* outdoor bought plants and *(d)* outdoor hired plants in each year since 1997. [205620]

Alun Michael: Purchases of plants are not separately identified. There has been a trend towards the provision of artificial plants to save ongoing maintenance costs. In the Department's offices there are now only two locations where live plants remain with maintenance charges of £2,566 per annum.

Departmental Policies (Hull)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull, North of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211810]

Alun Michael: Since its establishment in 2001 Defra has put in place a comprehensive programme of action on issues including sustainable development, climate change and energy, sustainable consumption and production, natural resource protection, sustainable rural communities, and a sustainable farming and food sector. A summary of some our achievements to date can be found at http://defra/corporate/achievements.htm. I am confident that the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency will have benefited from these.

Through our national strategy for waste, we are committed to delivering a step change to more sustainable waste management, including tough national targets to recycle or compost 17 per cent. of household waste by 2003–04, and 25 per cent. by 2005–06. To help local authorities achieve their own targets Defra's Waste Minimisation Fund was set up in 2002. As a result of successful bids for money from this fund by Kingston upon Hull City Council, the residents of the city should over the next few years reap the benefits, with a total of almost £2.4 million being awarded to the city council for the period 2003–04 and 2005–06 for projects to expand kerbside recycling schemes across the city covering a total of 110,000 households, including those in the Kingston upon Hull, North constituency.

River water quality has improved along the River Hull over the last seven years. In 1997, none of the river's length within the city council area was considered to be of fair or better chemical quality, while by 2003 70 per cent. was measured as being of fair chemical quality. Over this same period the biological quality of the river has been of fair quality or better throughout. These improvements reflect Defra's policy to improve river water quality, which is one of the headline indicator's of sustainable development and to raise compliance with the EC Water Framework Directive.

With grant support from Defra the Environment Agency has undertaken maintenance and improvement of flood defences around most of the Humber estuary, including those in front of Hull, while also managing the River Hull defences along with the city council, and riparian owners. Since the mid 1990s, and as a result of this Defra funding the Agency has invested approximately £25 million on improvements to the Hull defences on the estuary, and approximately £5 million on works on the River Hull.

Defra provides comprehensive statistical information. The following web address will take my hon. Friend directly to the service:

http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/default.asp

E-mails

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many e-mails were deleted by *(a)* her Department and *(b)* agencies for which her Department is responsible in (i) January 2004 and (ii) December 2004. [208682]

Alun Michael: The Department only keeps backup tapes for its e-mail servers for six weeks, therefore the information requested in part (i) is not available.

There are currently over 13,000 mailboxes on around 90 servers, each of which would need to be restored and individually interrogated to gather this information, therefore due to the disproportionate cost it would involve, it has not been possible to comply with part (ii) of the request.

Guidance issued from the head of the home civil service to all Departments in July 2004 provided a clear cross-departmental approach to the handling of e-mail correspondence, and a copy is available in the Library of the House.

Litter

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make it an offence for vehicle users to cause damage to other vehicles or road users by throwing litter, with particular reference to cigarette ends. [213339]

Alun Michael: The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Bill which has completed its committee stage in the House on 1 February 2005, confirms the definition of litter as including the dropping of cigarette ends as well as chewing gum. This will specifically enable enforcement officers to issue fixed penalty notices to road users who throw cigarette ends from their vehicles. The Bill does not contain a specific clause aimed at vehicle users who cause damage to other vehicles or road used, by throwing litter.

Sheep Tagging

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce the EU system for sheep tagging; and what discussions she has had with the National Farmers Union on this matter. [211892]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are working towards implementation of EU Regulation 21/2004 on the identification of sheep and goats by 9 July 2005. The regulation provides for double tagging of breeding sheep and goats, but allows member states to continue operating their national systems where these are approved by the Commission. We have applied to the Commission for approval of our National System and are currently awaiting their response.

My officials regularly speak to representatives of the NFU about implementation of the regulations and consulted them during the proposal stage. We have also ensured that they have been fully consulted on our application to the Commission to continue with our National System.

Bovine TB

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of measures to control TB in badgers in Gloucestershire; what further steps she is planning to take; and if she will make a statement. [211624]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are carrying out a badger culling trial in areas of the south west and west of England, including Gloucestershire, to assess whether culling badgers will help to control bovine TB in cattle.

The Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB (ISG) which oversees the trial, has undertaken to notify Ministers, without delay, of any significant findings emerging from the data gathered. We will consider any evidence provided by the ISG, as well as evidence emerging from other research, and use this to inform future policy on wildlife controls.

A limited Road Traffic Accident (RTA) survey is also being conducted in seven counties in England, including Gloucestershire, as part of a validation study. The objective is to determine if RTA data can provide an accurate indication of TB in badgers.

Work has begun on requirements for a field trial for a badger vaccine although further work is needed on methods of vaccination, monitoring the effectiveness of the vaccine and the effect of exposure of non-target species. In addition, work is focusing on improved diagnosis of TB in badgers, transmission routes between and within species, and understanding the epidemiology and risk factors for the disease.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoptions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many adoptions were completed by each social services department in each of the last five years for children aged *(a)* nought to three, *(b)* four to 10 and *(c)* over 10 years. [210234]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is only available for the period 1999 to 2003, and has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Autism

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 809–10W, on autism, if she will list the practical proposals for strengthening teacher training in special educational needs and disability issues referred to; what the timescale for their implementation is; and if she will make a statement. [213365]

Margaret Hodge: Working with the Teacher Training Agency, we are carrying forward a range of proposals designed to improve the special educational needs skills and confidence of trainee, newly qualified, and established teachers. The initiatives being discussed with interested parties include:

Developing resources, and exemplars of best practice, for training providers to use when assessing trainee teachers against the SEN elements of the Initial Teacher Training (ITT), Qualified Teacher Status and Induction Standards.

Establishing pilots of specialist SEN programmes within ITT.

Creating opportunities for trainee and newly qualified teachers to benefit from extended placement at special schools.

Establishing a network of experienced SEN tutors to facilitate better access to, and sharing of, specialist SEN expertise.

Creating opportunities for established teachers to undertake further post-graduate specialist SEN qualifications.

It is envisaged that the proposals will be implemented over the period 2005–2008.

Care

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were *(a)* taken into care and *(b)* placed for adoption in each of the last 10 years, broken down by age. [212053]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March by age on starting.

Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March by age on starting, 1994 to 2003[1,2,3]*—England*

Number

Year ending 31 March	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
All Children	31,400	32,500	32,100	29,900	29,700	28,400	28,600	25,200	25,300	24,100
Under 1	3,200	3,400	3,300	3,300	3,200	3,500	3,700	3,700	4,000	3,800
1–4	6,500	6,300	6,200	5,800	5,700	5,500	5,200	4,600	4,700	4,600
5–9	5,900	6,100	6,200	5,900	6,200	5,600	5,400	4,700	4,500	4,600
10–15	13,000	14,000	13,900	12,600	12,000	11,600	12,300	10,900	10,900	10,100
16+	2,800	2,700	2,600	2,200	2,600	2,200	2,000	1,300	1,300	1,000

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements.

[2] Only the first occasion on which a child started to be looked after in each year has been counted.

[3] Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Children Looked After by Local Authorities, Year Ending 31 March 2003

The following table shows the number of children placed for adoption at some point in the year ending 31 March by age on placement starting.

Children looked after placed for adoption at some point in the year ending 31 March by age on placement starting, 1994 to 2003[1,2,3,4,5]*—England*

Number

Year ending 31 March	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Number placed for adoption in year	3,800	3,700	3,800	3,900	4,200	4,900	6,100	7,100	7,800	7,200
Under 1	790	750	690	670	830	1,000	1,300	1,400	1,500	1,400
1–4	1,600	1,500	1,700	1,900	2,200	2,600	3,200	3,800	4,000	3,700
5–9	1,100	1,200	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,200	1,500	1,800	2,000	1,900
10–15	290	270	—	—	—	90	140	210	230	180
16+	10	10	—	—	—	10	10	10	20	0

[1] Figures exclude children looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements.

[2] Children looked after placed for adoption more than once in a year have only been counted once.

[3] Children looked after placed for adoption where the placement spans several years have been counted once in each year.

[4] Age at start of placement.

[5] Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. Figures between 1 and 5 have been suppressed and replaced by "—". All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

SSDA903 return

Child Care

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much money per head has been provided for *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school education in England in each of the last seven years; [207253]

(2) how much money per head has been provided for *(a)* nursery and *(b)* pre-school education within the North Somerset local education authority in each of the last seven years. [207254]

Margaret Hodge: There have been underlying changes to the provision for and the funding of under fives which mean it is not meaningful to give per pupil funding over time. These include the abolition of flat rate nursery vouchers and changes from a nursery formula based on the number of eligible pupils in an area, to a formula based on the number of nursery places made available in an area. Additionally, authorities have been increasing provision to meet the commitment to universal nursery education for all three and four-year-olds and in recent years LEAs have been funded for extra pupils to allow them to reach universal provision.

However, the following figures show the education expenditure by both central and local government for under fives in real terms. These figures do not include expenditure on child care nor on Sure Start:

	£ million
1997–98	2,029
1998–99	2,063
1999–2000	2,292
2000–01	2,569
2001–02	3,090
2002–03	3,138
2003–04	3,541

Details of the annual expenditure just by "central" Government since 1997 on nursery education but including Sure Start and child care, are published in Table 2.2 of the annual Department for Education and

Skills' Departmental Report, as follows. Services for young children and families have been increasingly integrated with nursery education and Sure Start since 2003–04 and the following table reflects this:

£ million

Financial year	*Sure start*	*Child Care*	*Nursery education*	*Total*
1997–98	n/a	4	637	641
1998–99	n/a	45	134	179
1999–2000	7	56	150	213
2000–01	56	65	247	368
2001–02	134	109	224	467
2002–03	216	158	306	680
2003–04	745	—	—	745
2004–05	993	—	—	993

Note:

The scale of spending identified in 1997–98 was due to a major injection of Nursery Education Grant funding to support the establishment of substantial free provision in the private and voluntary sectors.

Children's Centres

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list children's centres which are *(a)* open and *(b)* planned for the Islington North constituency; what the total cost of each is estimated to be; and what the funding source for each is. [210711]

Margaret Hodge: There will be five children's centres in my hon. Friend's constituency by March 2006 and three of these have opened already. The authority is working with its partners on how resources will be allocated to these children's centres. Each centre will be developed by adding services to an existing setting, using children's centre funding alongside funding for other related or relevant programmes. Children's centre funding allocated to Islington is a total of £4,182,898 to fund the development of the 10 children's centres planned in the local authority by March 2006. It is for the local authority to determine how to allocate these resources. The following table sets out our understanding of the local authority's current planning in respect of the children's centres in Islington North (these are broad estimates and are subject to change).

Centre name	*Based upon*	*Revenue funding for 2005/06 (£)*
Archway Children's Centre—Open	Neighbourhood nursery/Early Years Centre	184,960
Margaret Mcmillan Nursery School—Open	Sure Start Local Programme/Maintain ed School	20,504
Ambler—Planned	Maintained School/Early Years Centre	117,100
The Factory Children's Centre—Planned	Sure Start Local Programme	72,452
Willow Early Years Centre—Open	Sure Start Local Programme/Early Years Centre	52,465

Centre name	*Capital for 2005/06 (£)*	*Other sources of funding which might contribute*
Archway Children's Centre—Open	845,000	NNI funding £86,400, Lottery funding £79,856
Margaret Mcmillan Nursery School—Open	1,170,00	SSLP Revenue 05/06 = £789,022 Capital = £1,075,000
Ambler—Planned	1,000,000	
The Factory Children's Centre—Planned	1,000,000	SSLP Rev 05/06 = £759,022 Cap = £1,075,000
Willow Early Years Centre—Open	949,000	SSLP Rev = £768,750 Cap = £1,075,000

We will be writing to authorities in early February with details about the second phase of children's centre planning, including funding allocations. These new resources will enable authorities to sustain existing centres and start planning further centres to open between 2006–08. This will help towards meeting our target of 3,500 children centres by 2010—so every family has easy access to high quality integrated services in their community.

Exclusions

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many expulsions and exclusions of *(a)* children in foster care, *(b)* adopted children and *(c)* children in children's homes there were in the last period for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [212138]

Margaret Hodge: The table shows the number of children looked after at 30 September 2003 who had been looked after for at least 12 months, and the number and percentage of permanent exclusions from school. It is not possible to disaggregate this information by placement type. Information on the exclusion of adopted children is not collected centrally.

Number of children looked after at 30 September 2003 who had been looked after for at least 12 months, and number of permanent exclusions—England

	Number	*Percentage*[1]
Number of children looked after at 30 September, who had been looked after for at least 12 months	44,900	—
Of these:		
Number of permanent exclusions from school[2]	380	0.8

[1] Expressed as a percentage of the total number of children looked after at 30 September who had been looked after for at least 12 months.

[2] If a child was permanently excluded more than once in the previous school year, each occasion has been counted.

Source:

DfES

Foster Care

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many days' care was provided by foster carers in each year between 2000 and 2004. [212052]

Margaret Hodge: The number of days of care provided by foster placements in the year ending 31 March from 2000 to 2003 is shown. These are the latest available data. Detailed figures for 2003–04 are expected to be published in March 2005.

England	*Number of foster care days (Thousand)*
2000	13,500
2001	13,600
2002	13,800
2003	14,500

Source:
Children Looked After by Local Authorities, year ending 31 March 2003

Learning and Skills Council

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ensure that the Learning and Skills Council is informed of its overall level of funding in sufficient time for it to be able to inform further education colleges of their budgets for the next financial year; and if she will make a statement. [211579]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) received its Grant Letter for 2005–06 from the then Secretary of State on 15 November 2004. This was some three weeks earlier than in previous years.

The Government are continuing to invest significantly in further education. The investment we are making means that our commitment to increase FE funding rates by 5 per cent. and to fund growth in provision for young people is secured.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what length of contract was originally agreed with John Harwood as Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council; whether he resigned early from the post; and what the terms of his departure from the organisation were. [214070]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. I have asked Chris Banks the Council's Chairman to write to the hon. Gentleman with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the severance terms of the former Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council. [2141[illegible]]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The former Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) left the Learning and Skills Council on 30 September 2003 after three years in post. The severance terms took account of the remaining term of the original contract. Details are recorded in the LSC's Annual report for 2003–04.

Looked-after Children

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of looked-after children who entered university or further education in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212081]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of 19-year-old former care leavers in education on their 19th birthday. The information included in this table was not collected prior to the year 2001–02.

Former care leavers at age 19 who were looked after on 1 April 1999, 1 April 2000 and 1 April 2001 aged 16 (in their 17th year) in education[1,2,3]—England

	Year ending 31 March		
	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Number of care leavers aged 19	4,700	4,900	5,100
Number in education[4]	870	1,000	1,200
Percentage	18	21	23

[1] Figures are taken from the OC3 return.
[2] Figures exclude former care leavers who were looked after on 1 April aged 16 who were looked after under an agreed series of short-term placements.
[3] Figures over 1,000 have been rounded to the nearest 100. All other figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
[4] Includes those in higher education and those in education other than higher education.
Source:
Children Looked After in England (including adoptions and care leavers) 2003–04.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of looked-after children who achieved five or more high grade passes (A-C) in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212083]

Margaret Hodge: The following table shows the number of children in school year 11 who were looked after for at least 12 months for the years ending September 2000 to 2003 and who obtained five GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A* to C. Information was not collected centrally for the years between 1997 and 1999.

	England	
As at 30 September	*Number of children looked after in Year 11 for at least 12 months*	*Number with 5 GCSEs (or equivalent) at grade A* to C*
2000	3,900	280
2001	4,200	330
2002	4,300	320
2003	4,600	400

Source:
DfES

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of looked-after children who suffer from drug or alcohol related problems. [212085]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not held centrally.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her most recent estimate is of the number of looked-after children who have become homeless after leaving care. [212087]

Margaret Hodge: The latest available data, published on 17 November 2004 (http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000533/index.shtml), relates to those care leavers who were aged 19 in the year ending 31 March 2004. There were 5,100 care leavers in that period. Councils were in touch with 4,400 of these and only 320 of them were living in bed and breakfast or emergency accommodation. It is not possible to comment on the housing arrangements of those young people that were not in touch with their council.

Low Income Families

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children lived in low income households in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [211585]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Poverty is about more than low income, it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Data on the number of children in Great Britain living in low income households are published in the Department for Work and Pensions' Households Below Average Income series. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting absolute and relative trends in low income.

According to the latest data, in 2002/03 2.6 million children in the United Kingdom were living in households below 60 per cent. median income on the Before Housing Costs measure, and 3.6 million children were living in low income on the After Housing Costs measure. Data for 2003/04 are not available until spring 2005, when they will be published as part of Households Below Average Income publication.

In December 2003, we published "Measuring child poverty" which outlines the Government's new measure of child poverty which will be used from 2004/05.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

Private Children's Homes

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* announced and *(b)* unannounced inspections of private children's homes have taken place in each of the last five years. [210360]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Information on the number of announced and unannounced inspections that have taken place of all children's homes, including private homes, from 1 April 2002 to 19 January 2005 is shown in the following table. We do not hold information specifically relating to the inspection of private children's homes.

	2002/03	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Announced inspections	1,702	1,761	1,660
Unannounced inspections	1,030	1,660	1,109
All inspections	2,732	3,421	2,769

Note:

1 April 2004 to 19 January 2005 only

Information is not available prior to 1 April 2002, the date when the National Care Standards Commission was created.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills why Protection of Children Act (PoCA) and Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) referrals are not automatically cross-checked; and if he will require the automatic cross-checking of PoVA and PoCA lists. [213296]

Margaret Hodge: There is provision for cross referral between the two schemes. Where an individual is added to one of the lists, they will also be considered for inclusion on the other list, if the misconduct means that they may be unsuitable to work with children and vulnerable adults. This means that, where appropriate, some individuals are included on both lists, therefore removing the need for cross-checking.

Security Industry Association (Funding)

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether Learning and Skills Council funding is available for the Security Industry Association's training programmes. [213881]

Mr. Ivan Lewis *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Decisions by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) about the training courses they fund are a matter for the council and individual learning providers. I understand the LSC does fund the British Security Industry Association's programmes through a number of further education providers in England.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average cost is per pupil of compiling a statement of special education needs by a local education authority. [213175]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The Department does not collect this data. However, the Audit Commission report "Statutory assessment and statements of SEN: in need of review?", published in spring 2002, estimated the cost to be £2,500. This estimate was based on a sample of data from fieldwork sites.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average number of hours of intervention a pre-school child with special educational needs receives; and if she will make a statement. [213363]

Margaret Hodge: Information on the number of hours of intervention received by pre-school children with special educational needs is not collected centrally. Early years services are determined locally to meet the needs of individual children. This would include any specific intervention to address particular needs.

The Government's strategy to improve services for children with special educational needs "Removing Barriers to Achievement", published in February 2004, includes proposals to improve support to families who have pre-school children with special needs and disabilities. We are, for example, supporting a range of initiatives through our Early Support Programme designed to improve the support offered to disabled children aged under three and their families.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils with special needs attended each secondary school in Buckinghamshire in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002 and *(c)* 2003. [200729]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 30 November 2004]*: The requested information has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Special Schools

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding streams are available to *(a)* maintained special schools, *(b)* non-maintained special schools operated by the not-for-profit sector and *(c)* non-maintained special schools operated by the commercial sector. [214412]

Margaret Hodge: Funding for maintained special schools is provided through local authorities. The majority of local authority funding is provided by government with the rest from council tax. It is for local authorities to determine how best to distribute government funding between and within services. Funding for schools, including special schools, is distributed by application of a funding formula, which calculates the budget share for each school. It is for each authority to devise and revise its own school funding formula taking into account local needs and circumstances. In general terms the funding per pupil for maintained special schools is higher than that for pupils in maintained mainstream reflecting the greater needs of those pupils. Access to funding for capital projects is also provided through local authorities.

The prime source of funding for non-maintained special schools operated by charities or charitable trusts on a not-for-profit basis and approved under Section 342(1) of the Education Act 1996 is through fees paid by local authorities placing children in schools. However, approximately £8 million of funding is made available to the sector from the Department. This funding is paid direct to schools by the Department and includes capital and revenue funding. Capital funding covers Devolved Formula Capital, Electronic Learning Credits and an Annual Capital Round that is usually run on a competitive bidding round for projects that meet specific criteria set by the Department. Revenue funding includes access to Schools Standard Grant, Standards Fund, Teacher Threshold and Laptops for Teachers.

No government funding is provided directly to non-maintained special schools operating in the commercial sector. The primary source of funding for these schools is through the charging of fees for pupils placed at the school. Almost all pupils are placed by local authorities who are responsible for any fees.

Students

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students admitted to *(a)* Staffordshire University and *(b)* the University of Keele were (i) overseas non-EU, (ii) EU and (iii) UK students in each year between 1997 and 2004; and what percentage of the total number of such students each of these figures represent. [212297]

Dr. Howells: The available information is given in the following table.

Number and percentage of full time undergraduate students by domicile at the University of Keele and Staffordshire University

Domicile	*1996/97*	*1997/98*	*1998/99*	*1999/2000*	*2000/01*	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*
University of Keele								
Home	1,205	1,425	1,425	1,435	1,350	1,595	1,750	1,970
EU	150	185	140	125	110	115	65	85
Other overseas	135	125	120	110	95	115	165	165
Total	1,485	1,735	1,685	1,665	1,555	1,825	1,980	2,225
Percentage home	81	82	85	86	87	87	88	89
Percentage EU	10	11	8	7	7	6	3	4
Percentage other overseas	9	7	7	6	6	6	8	8
Staffordshire University								
Home	3,590	3,310	4,110	3,900	4,045	3,380	2,810	2,660
EU	300	305	320	330	300	185	165	195
Other overseas	265	275	140	175	190	210	225	270
Total	4,155	3,890	4,575	4,405	4,530	3,775	3,200	3,125
Percentage home	86	85	90	89	89	89	88	85
Percentage EU	7	8	7	8	7	5	5	6
Percentage other overseas	6	7	3	4	4	6	7	9

Note:
Numbers are on a snapshot basis as at 1 December and are rounded to the nearest 5.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Teenage Pregnancy

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made about the number of girls aged under 18 years in *(a)* children's homes and *(b)* foster care who became pregnant in each year between 1997 and 2004. [212084]

Margaret Hodge: This information is not held centrally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what percentage of antisocial behaviour orders served in 2004 had been breached by 31 December 2004; [211749]

(2) what percentage of applications for antisocial behaviour orders have been turned down; [211750]

(3) what percentage of antisocial behaviour orders have been served to people with a diagnosed mental illness. [211751]

Ms Blears: Information on the number of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBO) issued in 2004 that were breached by 31 December 2004 will be available in the autumn of 2005.

ASBOs are heard on application in the civil and county courts. Data on numbers applied for, granted and refused are collected centrally. Of the 2,035 applications notified to the Home Office up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), 2 per cent. (42) were refused. The Crown Prosecution Service may also make an application for an ASBO to be imposed in a criminal case. My Department does not collect data on such applications.

Information is not collected centrally about the characteristics of persons issued with an ASBO.

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals are still resident in the UK more than six months after all appeals against their removal have been exhausted; and if he will make a statement. [211598]

Mr. Browne: Information on the number of individuals who are still resident in the UK more than six months after all appeals against their removal have been exhausted is not available. In part this is because some individuals leave the country without notifying the Immigration Service.

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the asylum registration card issued by his Department establishes a right of abode in the UK. [212101]

Mr. Browne: No. The application registration card provides an acknowledgement of a claim for asylum in the United Kingdom and certifies the holder's status as an asylum seeker. The card neither confers nor implies a right of abode within the UK.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the Government's responsibilities to asylum seekers under the 1951 Refugee Convention and the European Convention on Human Rights. [212261]

Mr. Browne: As a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the United Kingdom must not remove any asylum applicant if to do so would expose them to a well founded fear of persecution. We are proud of the United Kingdom's record in providing a safe haven for refugees, many of whom are fleeing in fear of their lives from the most desperate human cruelty. Like all other developed countries, we will continue to meet our obligations under the Refugee Convention which is part of a legal and ethical framework that enshrines basic principles of human decency.

The European Convention on Human Rights imposes various obligations on States in their treatment of everyone within their jurisdiction, which includes asylum seekers. ECHR case law also prohibits the return of anyone to a place where they would face a real risk of torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Belmarsh Detainees

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005 *Official Report,* column 276W, on the Belmarsh detainees, whether subsistence costs for "G" are paid from Government funds. [210168]

Paul Goggins: It would not be appropriate for me to discuss details of any benefits or other support payments made by the Government to an individual.

Burglary (Householder Prosecutions)

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many householders have been prosecuted for alleged offences arising out of the burglary of their homes in each of the last 10 years; and how many have been convicted. [211723]

Paul Goggins: It is not possible to identify those persons prosecuted for offences arising out of the burglary of their homes, as circumstances surrounding an offence are not centrally collected on the Home Office Court Proceedings database. However the DPP would look for clear evidence of very excessive force before considering a prosecution.

CCTV (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been allocated for CCTV cameras in Coventry, South since 1997. [210397]

Ms Blears: Since 1997, the Home Office has allocated £717,742 to Coventry to ensure full coverage of the system across the town under the Closed Circuit Television Initiative, which formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme (CRP).

Since the completion of the Crime Reduction Programme in 2002, crime reduction funding has been allocated directly to the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership through the Building Safer Communities fund and to Basic Command Unit (BCU) Commanders through the BCU fund. These funding streams finance a variety of interventions, including CCTV, to tackle local crime priorities. The method of allocating funding across the area is the responsibility of Coventry city council and West Midlands police.

Correspondence

David Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will send a further reply to the hon. Member for Walsall, North's letter of 9 November 2004, ref. P393908, setting out the latest position. [213512]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* I shall send a further reply to my hon. Friend's letter of 9 November 2004 as soon as the results of our further inquiries are known.

Crime (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of *(a)* anti-social behaviour and *(b)* alcohol-related crime there have been in (i) the Derbyshire constabulary and (ii) the western area of the Derbyshire constabulary in each of the last seven years. [211910]

Ms Blears: Anti-social Behaviour is not a crime type and as such there is no definition from which the number of incidents could be reliably calculated, particularly going back seven years which pre-dates the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Alcohol related crime is the same, many crimes occur as a result of alcohol but again as it is not a crime category in itself we could not reliably measure it.

Criminal Records Bureau

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to require volunteers to pay for checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. [213333]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* There are no plans to require volunteers to pay for checks with the Criminal Records Bureau.

Fines/Fixed Penalties

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of *(a)* fixed penalties and *(b)* fines imposed by the courts in England and Wales were collected in full in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03 and *(c)* 2003–04. [201435]

Caroline Flint: Available information (by calendar year) for England and Wales on the percentage of motoring fixed penalties paid are given in the table. Information for 2003 will be available in the spring of 2005.

Motoring offences

Percentage

Fixed penalties	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]
Paid within 28 days	58.1	59.1	58.7
Payment accepted after 28 days	22.3	23.1	23.2
Total paid	80.4	82.2	81.9

[1] Estimates.

The latest provisional data shows that, up to 31 August 2004, 28,743 penalty notices for disorder have been issued by police forces in England and Wales of which 12,978, or 45 per cent., were paid in full within the 21 day payment period. If the penalty is not paid or a court hearing requested within this time then a fine is registered against the individual. The evaluation of data from the pilots of penalty notices for disorder showed that payment of fines added to the penalties paid on time resulted in an overall payment rate of 70 per cent.

Information from the Department for Constitutional Affairs shows that the payment rate for financial penalties was 59 per cent. in 2001–02, 55 per cent. in 2002–03, 74 per cent. in 2003–04 and 79 per cent. in 2004–05 (August to October).

However, as a result of revisions in the method of calculating the payment rate, direct year-on-year comparisons cannot be made and although recent changes to the way data are collected from Magistrates' Court Committees allows confiscation orders to be excluded, it is still not possible for fines, costs and compensation to be identified separately, so the figures relate to financial penalties in general, as opposed to fines in isolation.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs' Enforcement Programme is delivering a wide programme of change aimed at improving the enforcement and administration of financial penalties. The national payment rate is currently (Q3 2004–05) at 80 per cent., up 9 per cent. on the same period last year, and performance is on trajectory to meet the 78 per cent. national target at the end of the year. The ongoing work of the Programme includes improving the intelligence available to enforcement teams through a variety of information-sharing measures, national implementation of the new legislative framework for enforcement provided by the Courts Act and taking the opportunity offered by the launch of HMCS to introduce more effective and efficient ways of working. The Programme has also devised and supported a series of nationally co-ordinated fine enforcement blitzes, with the most recent—'Operation Payback 2' in November 2004—resulting in a positive impact on the payment rate of £1.7 million.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued in each authority for nuisance behaviour in each year since their introduction. [210731]

Ms Blears: 6,043 penalty notices for disorder were issued in the 12 months from August 2002 when the scheme was piloted in four police force areas. 57,472 (a provisional figure) have been issued in the period January to December 2004. Details by police force area are shown in the table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder given for all offences during 2002, 2003 and 2004—England and Wales

Police force area	*Number of PNDs issued for all offences during pilot period*[1]	*Number of PNDs issued for all offences in 2004*[2]
Avon and Somerset	—	466
Bedfordshire	—	487
Cambridgeshire	—	320
Cheshire	—	894
Cleveland	—	554
Cumbria	—	576
Derbyshire	—	620
Devon and Cornwall	—	1,845
Dorset	—	475
Durham	—	376
Essex	1,644	2,635
Gloucestershire	—	690
Greater Manchester	—	2,200
Hampshire	—	1,756
Hertfordshire	—	373
Humberside	—	1,387
Kent	—	694
Lancashire	—	4,868
Leicestershire	—	638
London, City of	—	47
Lincolnshire	—	442
Merseyside	—	3,556
Metropolitan police[3]	392	10,675
Norfolk	—	469
North Yorkshire	—	801
Northamptonshire	—	536
Northumbria[4]	—	194
Nottinghamshire	—	970
South Yorkshire	—	1,687
Staffordshire	—	1,394
Suffolk	—	445
Surrey	—	200
Sussex	—	1,432
Thames Valley	—	868
Warwickshire	—	448
West Mercia	—	197
West Midlands	3,569	4,567
West Yorkshire	—	4,035
Wiltshire	—	491
Dyfed-Powys	—	405
Gwent	—	379
North Wales[3]	438	1,197
South Wales	—	183
Total England and Wales	6,043	57,472

[1] August 2002 to August 2003.

[2] Provisional.

[3] Part of force only involved in pilot.

[4] Commenced issuing penalty notices from 1 November 2004.

Foreign Students

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long, on average, it took to process an application by an international student for leave to remain in the last period for which figures are available. [213281]

Mr. Browne: Since the introduction of charges on 1 August 2003, we have been completing approximately 70 per cent. of postal applications within three weeks of receiving them in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

We may not be able to complete applications within three weeks of receipt if they need further documents, inquiries or an interview, or if they are complex. We should normally deal with these within 13 weeks at most. A very small minority which are particularly complex or sensitive may take a little longer.

Those international students who use the Student Batch Scheme through their Student Advisors have their applications decided within three weeks or earlier. The percentage of Batch Scheme cases decided at the Initial Consideration Stage is much higher than average—approximately 90 per cent.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department expects to raise in each of the next three years from levying charges on students applying for leave to remain. [213282]

Mr. Browne: In the past non-asylum immigration services were provided free of charge to applicants, at considerable cost to the UK taxpayer.

The Government believe it is appropriate to expect those who benefit from the provision of immigration services to meet the cost of providing those services. In 2003–04, this saved the UK taxpayer £70 million.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of processing a visa extension application made by an international student studying at a UK university; how the cost was assessed; and on what data he based his calculation of the cost. [213284]

Mr. Browne: On 1 August 2003 the Home Office introduced charges for leave to remain applications, including those from international students. Fees were calculated to recover the full administrative costs (including staffing and overhead costs) of processing applications to the point of conveying a decision.

We have recently consulted stakeholders on proposals to extend the principle of cost recovery charging, to include the costs of providing an appeal function and the costs of delivering enforcement activity. The consultation closed on 8 December 2004. The outcome of the consultation and the final fee levels will be announced in February 2005.

The fee ranges have been calculated using the full cost recovery formula approved by HM Treasury. A full explanation of how the costs are calculated will be laid before Parliament when the Fees Regulations are amended.

The fee ranges have been calculated using the full cost recovery formula approved by HM Treasury. A full explanation of how the costs are calculated will be laid before Parliament when the Fees Regulations are amended.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what data he has collected on the average level of income for an international student studying at a UK university; and whether he will take account of the average level of income for international students studying in the UK when calculating the proposed level of increase to visa extension charges. [213286]

Mr. Browne: A joint project team—comprising representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the British Council—has undertaken an assessment of the likely impact of increased leave to remain fees on attracting international students to the UK.

International student costs and spending has been taken into account as part of this project, the outcomes of which will be made available when the Government announces its response to the recent Home Office Consultation on "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications" in February.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK economy of the proposed increase in visa extension charges for international students. [213304]

Mr. Browne: A Regulatory Impact Assessment of the proposed increase in charges for "leave to remain applications" on the education sector and the UK economy will be published when the Government announces its response to the recent Home Office Consultation on "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications' in February.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what data he collects on the quality of service international students receive while processing a visa extension. [213305]

Mr. Browne: Since the introduction of charges on 1 August 2003, we have been completing approximately 70 per cent. of postal applications within three weeks of receiving them in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

We may not be able to complete applications within three weeks of receipt if they need further documents, inquiries or an interview, or if they are complex. We should normally deal with these within 13 weeks at most. A very small minority which are particularly complex or sensitive may take a little longer.

Those international students who use the Student Batch Scheme through their Student Advisors have their applications decided within three weeks or earlier. The percentage of Batch Scheme cases decided at the Initial Consideration Stage is much higher than average—approximately 90 per cent.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passports have been lost by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate while processing international student applications for leave to remain over the past five years. [213306]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the number of letters issued for passports reported lost or mislaid by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) while processing international student applications for LTR over the last five years would be available only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the plans to increase visa charges on the number of international students studying in the United Kingdom. [213307]

Mr. Browne: A joint project team—comprising representatives from the Department for Education and Skills, the Home Office and the British Council—has undertake an assessment of the likely impact of increased leave to remain fees to attract more international students to the UK.

The outcomes of this work will be made available, alongside a regulatory impact assessment for the education sector, when the Government announce their response to the recent Home Office Consultation on "Review of Charges for Immigration Applications".

Identity Cards and Passports (Forgery)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many forged passports have been confiscated or impounded by Customs and Immigration officers in the last 12 months; [207329]

(2) how many forged passports have been confiscated or impounded in the last three years by *(a)* Customs and Immigration officers and *(b)* the police. [207484]

Mr. Browne: The fraudulent use of passports (including forged and counterfeit documents) is taken very seriously by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, HM Customs and the police. In addition to referrals from HM Customs and the police service, fraudulent travel documents are identified by the Immigration Service at ports of entry as well as during enforcement operations. There is no single central record of the total number of forged passports confiscated or impounded by Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND), Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMCE) and the police. However the available statistics show:

Since 2001 numbers of fraudulent[1] travel documents detected at United Kingdom ports of entry are as follows:

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[1] In the context of forgery statistics "Travel documents" is the all embracing term for passports, ID cards, refugee travel documents, certificates of identity, seaman's books and visas.

	Number
2001	6,601
2002	9,664
2003	7,985

Figures are not available to indicate how many of these documents were detected by Customs or Immigration Officers or by the police.

In addition, since 2001 the National Document Fraud Unit has had a permanent presence in the main offices of IND in Croydon, following a pilot exercise which revealed large numbers of fraudulent travel documents being submitted in support of applications for leave to remain. Fraudulent documents detected by NDFU in Croydon from 2001 are:

	Number
2001	360
2002	461
2003	837
2004	1,044

Illegal Immigration

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what technical surveillance equipment is installed at ports of entry to the UK; and how many sniffer dogs are deployed at ports of entry. [213185]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* A range of surveillance equipment is installed at UK ports of entry. This includes CCTV cameras to record both arriving and departing passengers and New Detection Technology (NDT) to detect clandestine entrants. The location of this equipment is as follows:

The Immigration Service operates cameras at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports. In addition to the systems operated solely by the Immigration Service access is provided at other locations by the port operators to their local systems.

A combination of NDT, including Passive Millimetric Wave Imagers, Heart Beat Detectors, Gamma Ray Scanner and CO_2 probes are deployed at various locations including Calais, Coquelles, Dunkirk, Ostend, Zeebrugge and Vlissingen. This technology is either operated by the port authority, the carrying company or by UK immigration staff.

CO_2 probes are also deployed at various UK locations and in addition the Mobile Freight Search Team, deploying both CO_2 probes and body detection dogs covers a variety of United Kingdom Ports. The team is intelligence led and maintains the flexibility to respond to threats at other ports.

Details of the deployment of NDT and the Mobile Freight Search Team cannot be released, as this would compromise Border Control operations.

The UK Immigration Service currently has eight body detection dogs and they are deployed at both juxtaposed locations and in the UK.

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints from *(a)* England and Wales, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* Southend have been (i) made to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, (ii) upheld and (iii) investigated by (A) the authority, (B) another police force and (C) an independent organisation since its inception in April 2004. [208278]

Ms Blears: The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) informs me that 4,043 complaints from England and Wales and 108 complaints from Essex have been made direct to the IPCC.

As of 25 January 2005, there were 21 investigations being independently investigated by the IPCC, of which four complaints were made direct to the IPCC.

However, as it is the responsibility of individual police forces to record all complaints, and because not all complaints come through, or involve the participation of, the IPCC, the other statistics requested by my hon. Friend could be obtained only from the IPCC, police forces and police authorities at disproportionate cost.

Although there is no statutory requirement for the IPCC, Essex Police, or indeed any other organisation to collect or record the information that my hon. Friend requests, the IPCC will collect and publish complaints' statistics on an annual basis. The IPCC hopes to publish the first set of figures for the year beginning 1 April 2004, in November of this year.

Finally, I understand that the IPCC would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the hon. Gentleman direct any questions that he may have on the new complaints system and the keeping of statistics.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the response time for the Independent Police Complaints Commission to acknowledge receipt of a complaint by letter was in the latest period for which figures are available. [211065]

Ms Blears: I am informed by the Independent Police Complaints Commission that it does not acknowledge receipt of a complaint.

In each case, it contacts the complainant for his/her consent to pass the complaint for recording to the police force concerned and, if necessary, for further information. Response time for this action varies according to the processes and is recorded only on case files. This information can be retrieved only at a disproportionate cost.

Legislation

Brian White: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what pieces of legislation passed in the last 30 years that the Department is responsible for remain to be brought into force, broken down by year of enactment. [200446]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table, which has been placed in the Library, lists the Bills introduced by the Home Office in the sessions 1997–98, 1998–99, 1999–2000, 2000–2001, 2001–2002 and 2002–2003. The table indicates the extent to which provisions are not in force or only partially in force.

It is not possible to provide information for legislation passed in the last 30 years without incurring disproportionate cost.

Littering (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices for littering have been issued by Derbyshire community support officers in the last 12 months. [211911]

Ms Blears: Community Support Officers (CSOs) have not yet been deployed by Derbyshire Constabulary. The Constabulary was allocated 43 CSO posts under the first phase of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund. I understand that those recruited for these posts will begin training shortly.

Motoring Offences (Sentencing Review)

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the review of sentencing for motoring offences commenced; and when he expects the review to conclude. [211540]

Ms Blears: The Home Secretary commissioned the Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving in 2003.

The review will be followed by the publication of a public consultation paper setting out our proposals for reform of this area of the law.

The publication of the consultation paper is being treated as a top priority and we hope to publish very shortly.

People Trafficking

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many instances of the trafficking of *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* children into the UK have been investigated in each of the last five years; how many individuals were involved; how many court cases have resulted; and what the outcome was in each case. [213375]

Mr. Browne: We do not keep central statistics on trafficking cases other than in published statistics on court proceedings. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester, East (Keith Vaz) on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1592W. We are now starting to see convictions under the new legislation on trafficking and these will be reported in published statistics in due course.

Reflex continues to co-ordinate law enforcement activity against organised immigration crime, including people trafficking. From April 2003-March 2004 Reflex resulted in the disruption of 38 groups involved in organised immigration crime at National Intelligence Model Level 3, and this financial year Reflex has resulted in 38 disruptions of criminal networks so far.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many victims of human trafficking into the UK have been returned to their home countries in each of the last five years; to which countries; what support was given to the individuals concerned; and if he will make a statement. [213377]

Mr. Browne: Information on those who were removed who were victims of human trafficking in the UK, and the country to which they were removed, is not available.

Police

Mr. Denham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what performance targets have been set for individual basic command units by his Department. [209170]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* There have been no performance targets for basic command units (BCU) set by central Government. Individual performance targets are a matter for the chief constable and police authority of a given force to agree. In agreeing force or BCU targets regard must be had to the policing priorities as laid out in the National Policing Plan, however these do not set specific targets.

Police forces are also expected to contribute to other local targets which are not specifically police owned. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships, of which both police forces and police authorities are members, and Local Criminal Justice Boards will agree crime reduction targets and targets for numbers of offences brought to justice respectively.

While these are not police targets, clearly the police service will have a significant role in their delivery.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* police officers and *(b)* community support officers have been employed by Staffordshire constabulary in each of the past seven years. [211708]

Ms Blears: The following table sets out Staffordshire police strength since 1997–98.

Staffordshire police

As at 31 March	*Police officer strength*
1997	2,211
1998	2,292
1999	2,238
2000	2,170
2001	2,129
2002	2,133
2003	2,202
2004	2,266
2004 (31 August)	2,274

Community Support Officers (CSOs) were introduced by the Police Reform Act 2002 and CSO's were first recruited in Staffordshire in December 2003. By December 2004 there were 27 CSOs on patrol in Staffordshire.

Funding for an additional 35 CSOs for Staffordshire is being made available under the first phase of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what records of *(a)* alcohol-related crime and *(b)* antisocial behaviour offences are kept by police forces; and if he will make a statement. [209246]

Ms Blears: The records kept by police forces are matters for their Chief Officers, except where they relate to requests for information by the Home Office. The Home Office does not currently request regular data on either alcohol-related crime or antisocial behaviour offences.

Mr. Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the effect on policing in the event of the closure of the beat house in Preston Candover, Hampshire; and if he will make a statement. [210672]

Ms Blears: The decision by Hampshire Constabulary to sell the Preston Candover Beat House was taken in line with Force policy. Management of the police estate—and allocation of resources—are matters for the Police Authority and the Chief Officer, who are responsible for assessing local needs.

Preston Candover beat will continue to have a dedicated officer working full-time in the community. The constabulary are currently attempting to find an alternative beat office within the area from which the beat officer can work. A full assessment has been undertaken, and it is expected that there will be no impact on the delivery of service in the area.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been employed as special constables in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the last seven years. [213062]

Ms Blears: The data available on special constabulary strength in the Stoke-on-Trent Basic Command Unit is for 31 March 2004, when there were 109 special constables deployed.

Prisons

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many day releases there have been from London prisons during the last 12 months. [210312]

Paul Goggins: In the period 1 December 2003 to 30 November 2004 there were 50,625 day releases (known officially as Release on Temporary Licence) from London prisons, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were in care as a result of their mother's imprisonment in the last year for which figures are available; and what percentage of these children were subsequently returned to their mother's care. [206280]

Paul Goggins: There is no automatic link between a mother's imprisonment and her child being taken into the care of the Social Services. Many female prisoners' children are cared for by the mother's partner, family or friends. In those cases, mothers will normally resume their care role on release from prison.

A child will be considered for care by Social Services only if a suitable alternative carer is not available. Whether the mother will resume care of the child on her release from prison depends upon her individual circumstances, and what is considered to be in the child's best interests by the Social Services and the courts.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners shared cells in each month since 1997. [205327]

Paul Goggins: A proportion of the prison population is held in accommodation certified to be shared in uncrowded conditions. However, information about the number of prisoners held in this type of accommodation is not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

It is sometimes necessary to hold prisoners in crowded conditions, for example two prisoners in a cell certified for one. Information on the number of prisoners held in crowded conditions is available from 1 April 1998 and is set out in the table.

Date	*Number of prisoners*	*Percentage of prisoners*
1 April 1998	13,466	20.6
1 May 1998	13,211	20.3
1 June 1998	13,276	20.2
1 July 1998	13,243	19.9
1 August 1998	13,093	19.9
1 September 1998	13,158	20.0
1 October 1998	13,238	20.2
1 November 1998	13,055	19.8
1 December 1998	12,293	19.2
1 January 1999	12,520	19.3
1 February 1999	12,421	19.6
1 March 1999	12,603	19.6
1 April 1999	11,983	18.6
1 May 1999	11,582	18.0
1 June 1999	12,166	18.9
1 July 1999	13,543	20.8
1 August 1999	13,750	21.0
1 September 1999	13,409	20.4
1 October 1999	13,342	20.2
1 November 1999	13,299	20.2
1 December 1999	12,445	20.1
1 January 2000	13,005	20.4
1 February 2000	13,609	20.9
1 March 2000	13,453	20.6
1 April 2000	11,151	17.3
1 May 2000	10,634	16.2
1 June 2000	11,061	17.0
1 July 2000	11,546	17.5
1 August 2000	11,917	18.1
1 September 2000	11,341	17.5
1 October 2000	11,558	18.0
1 November 2000	11,317	17.7
1 December 2000	9,915	16.1
1 January 2001	11,198	17.7
1 February 2001	11,806	18.3
1 March 2001	11,927	18.2
1 April 2001	11,401	17.4
1 May 2001	11,642	17.6
1 June 2001	11,574	17.4
1 July 2001	12,435	18.5
1 August 2001	12,101	18.0
1 September 2001	12,785	19.0
1 October 2001	12,312	18.1
1 November 2001	13,021	19.0
1 December 2001	12,389	18.8
1 January 2002	13,168	19.4
1 February 2002	13,963	20.0
1 March 2002	13,642	19.5
1 April 2002	15,973	22.6
1 May 2002	15,403	21.7
1 June 2002	17,118	24.0
1 July 2002	15,531	21.8
1 August 2002	16,049	22.5
1 September 2002	16,371	22.7
1 October 2002	16,786	23.1
1 November 2002	17,063	23.6
1 December 2002	16,103	23.1
1 January 2003	17,672	24.9
1 February 2003	18,283	25.3
1 March 2003	18,318	25.1
1 April 2003	17,100	23.5
1 May 2003	17,677	24.3
1 June 2003	18,962	25.7
1 July 2003	17,831	24.1
1 August 2003	16,895	23.1
1 September 2003	17,702	24.0
1 October 2003	17,907	24.1
1 November 2003	17,295	23.4
1 December 2003	17,234	23.8
1 January 2004	17,510	23.8
1 February 2004	18,031	24.1
1 March 2004	17,675	23.5
1 April 2004	18,030	23.9
1 May 2004	17,872	23.9
1 June 2004	16,845	22.6
1 July 2004	16,711	22.3
1 August 2004	18,183	24.2
1 September 2004	16,520	22.1
1 October 2004	17,640	23.6
1 November 2004	17,677	23.5

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* prison officers and *(b)* staff have been injured in incidents involving fires at (i) Wetherby, (ii) Ashfield, (iii) Camphill, (iv) Durham and (v) Winchester prison establishments. [204621]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is in the following table. It covers incidents over the past 12 months.

Table 1. Officers and staff injured in incidents involving fires in the last 12 months:

Establishment	*Officers*	*Staff*
Durham	12	0
Wetherby [1]	5	0
Camphill	16	2
Winchester	8	0
Ashfield (private prison)	0	0
Totals	41	2

[1] Stats began/compiled only from May 2004

The majority of fires in prisons occur in prisoners' cells. Prison Officers are responsible for managing the situation until the fire brigade attend the scene and are, therefore, more likely to be injured than are other staff.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the cost for the supplies of drugs and pharmaceuticals prescribed to prisoners in Prison Service establishments was in each year from 1997 to 2003, broken down by *(a)* juvenile, *(b)* women's and *(c)* men's establishments; [210599]

(2) what the average cost was of pharmaceuticals prescribed per prisoner in each year from 1997 to 2003; [210602]

(3) what proportion of expenditure on drugs in prison establishments in each year from 2000 to 2003 were spent on *(a)* anti-psychotics, *(b)* anti-depressants, *(c)* sedatives and *(d)* drugs to treat addiction. [210603]

Paul Goggins: This information is not available in the form requested. The report "A Pharmacy Service for Prisoners" (Department of Health/H.M. Prison Service June 2003) indicated that the Prison Service spent in the order of £7 million a year on medicines, with expenditure per prisoner varying widely. A study of prescribing across five prisons in 2000 showed a range in annual average cost per prisoner of between £78 in a category C training prison for men and £273 in a local prison for men.

Stafford Prison Escape

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his written answer of 20 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 1088W, if he will ensure that his Department notifies the hon. Member for Stafford when the report into the escapes from Stafford Prison on 8 December 2004 is completed; and if he will arrange for the hon. Member to receive a briefing on the contents of the report. [211296]

Paul Goggins: The investigation into the escapes from Stafford prison has been completed and the report has been accepted by the Area Manager for the West Midlands. The Governor will contact my hon. Friend to arrange to brief him on the report.

Stop and Search (London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many stop and searches have been made by police officers of the Metropolitan police in the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [201852]

Ms Blears: The number of Stop and Searches of persons under s1 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and other legislation, carried out by the Metropolitan police over the last three years are as follows (Section 95—Statistics on Race and the Criminal Justice System).

	Number
2000–01	167,074
2001–02	197,333
2002–03	262,903

Telephone Tapping

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many telephone wire taps have been authorised in the last 12 months in the West Mercia police constabulary area. [213311]

Ms Blears: The most recently published figures for the numbers of interception warrants are contained in the report of the Interception of Communications Commissioner for 2003 (HC883). The available figures are not broken down by constabulary areas.

Terrorism Act

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been stopped and searched at RAF Menwith Hill under the Terrorism Act 2000 in each year since the Act came into force. [211767]

Ms Blears: Statistics showing the number of stop-searches in each force area for England and Wales under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 are published annually in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin.

Statistics are only collated for each force area, therefore the number of people stop-searched specifically at RAF Menwith Hill under the Terrorism Act 2000 is not available.

The number of stop-searches under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 for North Yorkshire, the force area covering RAF Menwith Hill, are:

Financial year	*Number*	
2001–02	8	Vehicles and occupants
	0	Pedestrians
2002–03	110	Vehicles and occupants
	0	Pedestrians
2003–04	30	Vehicles and occupants
	38	Pedestrians

The Statistical Bulletin can be found on the Research and Statistics section of the Home Office website.

Under-age Drinking (Hartlepool)

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions have taken place for under-age drinking in Hartlepool in each year since 1990. [211531]

Ms Blears: There is no specific offence of under-age drinking.

However, the available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database, gives the number of defendants aged 10 to 17 years who were proceeded against in Hartlepool PSA, for offences of being drunk, drunk at a designated sports event and drunk and disorderly together with defendants proceeded against for the offence of: "Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises", 1990–2003.

Statistics for 2004 will be available in the autumn.

Number of defendants proceeded against in Hartlepool PSA for alcohol related offences involving under 18-year-olds, 1990–2003[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*1990*	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Defendants aged 10 to 17 years															
Drunk in a highway or other public place whether a building or not, or on licensed premises	Licensing Act 1872 S.12	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Drunk in, or when entering, a designated sports event	Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc.) Act 1985 S.2(2)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Being guilty, while drunk, of disorderly behaviour	Criminal Justice Act 1967 S 91	4	4	5	2	6	12	33	24	18	19	8	11	15	9
All defendants															
Selling etc. intoxicating liquor to person under 18 for consumption on the premises	Licensing Act 1964 S.169A and B as added by Licensing (Young Persons) Act 2000 S.1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1

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[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 15 December from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Thomas Gill. [212287]

Mr. Leslie: The Secretary of State replied to my right hon. Friend on 2 February 2005.

Courts (Photography)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the Government intends to amend or repeal section 41 of the Criminal Justice Act 1925, following the statement by the Lord Chancellor that photography will be allowed in court. [213249]

Mr. Leslie: My Department will be consulting on the issue of court broadcasting until the end of February, and no decision has yet been taken as to whether photography will be allowed in court. No statement has been made by either the Lord Chancellor or myself to the effect that photography will be permitted. I hope that the hon. Member for Beaconsfield and other interested Members of the House will take the opportunity to participate in the consultation, perhaps by completing the consultation questionnaire, which is available electronically through my Department's website at http://www.dca.gov.uk/consult/courts/broadcasting-cp28-04.htm

Electoral Register

Tom Cox: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what checks are made on people whose names appear on electoral registers to ascertain whether they are eligible to vote in elections that may take place in the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [213386]

Mr. Leslie: Electoral registration officers (EROs) are responsible for compiling the electoral register and may require a person applying to be added to it to give additional information if they are in doubt as to whether that person is eligible to be registered. They may also refer to other records kept by the council or the registrar of births, marriages and deaths if they consider that further checks are necessary. It is an offence under the Representation of the People Act 1983 to fail to comply with a request for information from an ERO or to provide false or inaccurate information to a registration officer. The electoral register is available for public inspection which enables checks to be made that only eligible electors are on the register.

Legal Aid

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans the Secretary of State has to remove the £100,000 equity disregard for home owners in the assessment of eligibility for legal aid. [212050]

Mr. Lammy: The Legal Services Commission's consultation "a new focus for civil legal aid" concluded on 15 October 2004. This proposed a number of changes to the eligibility and scope of civil legal aid, including removing the current £100,000 equity disregard for homeowners from the assessment of legal aid eligibility. We are currently considering the way forward in the light of the responses. An announcement will be made in due course.

Newcastle Courts

Mr. Beith: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what changes have been made to sittings of the Law Courts in Newcastle as a consequence of security arrangements for the Labour party spring conference. [213888]

Mr. Leslie: There have been no changes to the sittings at Newcastle Law Courts as a consequence of security arrangements for the Labour party conference. The court is sitting to capacity. There are 10 criminal court rooms and three civil in the Quayside building with an additional two courtrooms in the nearby Moot Hall. There are 15 judges sitting.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Publications

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many publications were issued by her Department in each of the last four years. [214327]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows:

	Number
2001–02	21
2002–03	15
2003–04	13
2004–05	28

Liverpool (Redevelopment)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about the proposed plans to redevelop parts of Liverpool. [213511]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* As part of the Department's work with Liverpool on its European Capital of Culture programme my officials have had discussions with the Government office north west on the proposal by National Museums Liverpool, one of the national museums and galleries funded by DCMS for a new Museum of Liverpool Life; and also on the proposed redevelopment of Liverpool Central Library and Archive.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213679]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has conducted three staff surveys since 1997. The contract to run the staff survey was put out to tender in 2000 and the cost in each year since 1997 is set out as follows:

	Cost (£)
2000	17,964
2001	16,800
2003	15,745

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the expenditure of the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate and its predecessor was in each year since 1996–97; and what the estimated budget for the next financial year is. [211950]

Mr. Pond: The Benefit Fraud Inspectorate was formed in November 1997. No similar organisation existed prior to this date. The available information is in the table.

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate expenditure

	£ million
1996–97	0
1997–98[1]	3.44
1998–99	5.80
1999–2000	5.64
2000–01	5.88
2001–02	5.55
2002–03[2]	7.11
2003–04	7.71
2004–05	7.86
2005–06	No estimated budget available

[1] Expenditure represents November 1997 to March 1998.

[2] This included recruitment for Comprehensive performance Assessment work and Performance Improvement Action Team (funded by Treasury Invest to Save money).

Benefits

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many credits only recipients of incapacity benefit are *(a)* in receipt of income support, *(b)* in receipt of other benefits and *(c)* in receipt of no social security benefits. [214231]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information is in the table.

Working age recipients of incapacity benefit credits-only by benefit combination: August 2004

	All	*Also in receipt of income support*	*Also in receipt of another key benefit*	*Not receiving another key benefit*
Recipients of IB credits only	923,900	784,800	41,300	97,800

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Working age claimants are men aged 16–64 and women aged 16–59.
3. "Key benefits" are jobseeker's allowance, income support, incapacity benefit; severe disablement allowance, and disability living allowance.
4. Recipients of IB credits only are not entitled to jobseekers allowance or severe disability allowance. Therefore, those claimants who appear in the "Also in receipt of another key benefit" column are effectively those also in receipt of disability living allowance only.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Working Age Client Group sample.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many individuals were in receipt of *(a)* income support, *(b)* council tax benefit and *(c)* housing benefit in Southend-on-Sea in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2004; [213200]

(2) how many individuals were in receipt of *(a)* jobseeker's allowance (contribution based) and *(b)* jobseeker's allowance (income based), or their equivalents, in Southend-on-Sea in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2004. [213201]

Mr. Pond: Figures broken down by local authority are not available for these benefits prior to 2000.

The available information is in the table.

Benefit recipients in Southend-on-Sea at dates shown

	May 2000	*May 2004*
Housing benefit	12,100	12,200
Council tax benefit	15,000	15,200
Income support	12,300	6,500
Jobseeker's allowance (contributory based)	[1]500	[1]300
Jobseeker's allowance (income based)	2,800	1,800

[1] Numbers based on very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
3. Income-based JSA figures include claimants who would also be entitled to the contributory element.
4. From November 2003 income support for customers aged 60 and over was replaced by pension credit. The 2004 figure reflects this.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System—Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count and Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department made of the anticipated take-up levels via *(a)* bank accounts and *(b)* Post Office card accounts prior to the introduction of direct payment. [211994]

Mr. Pond: Around 90 per cent. of DWP customers have a bank account.

During the 2000 Spending Review a target of paying 85 per cent. of benefit and pensions customers into an account by 2005 was set. This target has now been achieved, almost a year early, and the Department is on course to comfortably exceed it by April 2005.

Our definition of "account" also includes the Post Office card account. In 2001 we announced we had a working assumption that 3 million card accounts would be opened. (This was not a target or a forecast of numbers.) More than 4 million card accounts have now been opened.

Correspondence

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Bassetlaw of 13 October 2004 about the Child Support Agency and his constituent, Catherine Pears. [214071]

Malcolm Wicks: My hon. Friend's letter was passed to the Chief Executive of the Child Support Agency who has replied today and apologised for the delay.

Low Income Households

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children were living in poverty in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [211566]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Poverty is about more than low income, it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Data on the number of children in Great Britain living in low income households are published in the Department for Work and Pensions' Households Below Average Income series. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting absolute and relative trends in low income.

According to the latest data, in 2002–03 2.6 million children in the United Kingdom were living in households below 60 per cent. median income on the Before Housing Costs measure, and 3.6 million children were living in low income on the After Housing Costs measure. Data for 2003–04 are not available until spring 2005, when they will be published as part of Households Below Average Income publication.

In December 2003, we published Measuring child poverty" which outlines the Government's new measure of child poverty which will be used from 2004–05.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

Child Poverty (Stoke-on-Trent)

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many children were living in poverty in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the past seven years; [213058]

(2) how many children lived in low income households in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the last seven years. [213061]

Mr. Pond: Our first step towards eradicating child poverty as set out in our current Public Service Agreement target is to reduce the number of children in low-income households by a quarter by 2004–05. This is measured using the proportion of children in relative low income households. Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03". Data are not available below the regional level and is only available as proportions at the regional level. It should be noted that the reporting of year on year changes in the regional low-income rates are not reliable.

'Measuring child poverty", published in December 2003, outlines the Governments measure of UK child poverty for the long-term. The measure will consist of three tiers; absolute low income, relative low income and material deprivation and low income combined. The Government will set a target as part of the 2006 SR06 Spending Review to halve by 2010–11 the numbers of children suffering a combination of material deprivation and relative low income. Data will not be available below the regional level.

All publications listed are available in the Library.

State Pensions

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department has made of the operational costs of the pension book in each year since 1997; and what percentage that represents of *(a)* the total budget for his Department and *(b)* the total budget of all UK Government Departments in each year since 1997. [211962]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested.

The total cost of all DSS-DWP order book transactions at the Post Office between April 1997 and March 2004 was £2.56 billion. This represented 5.69 per cent. of all DWP DEL expenditure over the same period and 0.17 per cent. of all Department's DEL expenditure over the same period. The order book figure does not include the costs of producing and issuing order books, dealing with lost or stolen books or other maintenance work within DWP connected with making payments.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department has made of fraud connected with the operation of the pension book in each year since 1997. [211988]

Mr. Pond: A breakdown of order book loss by benefit type is not available. The available information is in the table.

Estimated order book losses across all benefits administered by Department for Work and Pensions

	£ million
1997–98	98
1998–99	83.2
1999–2000	89.4
2000–01	58.0
2001–02	62.8
2002–03	49.7
2003–04	46.1

Notes:

1. Figures include duplicate encashment and manipulation/counterfeit losses for all benefits, not just the State Pension.

2. We use a methodology assuming a constant proportion of the "at risk" figure being fraudulent and a constant amount of fraud due to counterfeits and manipulations. The "at risk" figure for a

given period is the estimated value of all books stopped and not recovered in that period. This is the best estimate currently available.

3. Figures exclude War Pensions from 2002–03 onwards because Veterans Agency (War Pensions Agency) Programme Expenditure moved to the Ministry of Defence.

4. Figures exclude Child Benefit from 2003–04 onwards because Child Benefit Programme Expenditure moved to the Inland Revenue.

Source:

Losses are derived from figures from Jobcentre Plus, Payment Repository Computer System (PRCS) Centre.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many low cost home-ownership schemes promoted by his Department do not involve means-tested entry requirements. [213749]

Keith Hill: The Right to Buy and Right to Acquire schemes, which give tenants of local authorities and housing associations the statutory right to purchase their rented home, are not means-tested, except that they are not available to tenants who have bankrupt petitions pending against them, are undischarged bankrupts, or have made arrangements with their creditors which remain unfulfilled.

Other schemes, such as shared ownership, Homebuy and Key Worker Living, help social tenants, key workers and others on housing waiting lists into home ownership. These schemes, offered by housing associations with funding from the Housing Corporation, include affordability checks in the application process to ensure that purchasers can sustain the financial commitment of owner occupation.

Voluntary sales by social landlords and cash grants offered by local authorities to tenants to free up their rented property are offered at the discretion of individual social landlords.

Helen Southworth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he plans to take to increase the provision of affordable homes for people in Warrington. [213765]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on national policy for the provision of affordable housing in mixed communities. "Planning for Mixed Communities" was launched on 24 January and the consultation period ends on 15 April.

The Government Office, with its regional partners, is considering the provision of affordable housing, as part of the reviews of the Regional Housing and Regional Spatial Strategies for the North West. The strategies are expected to be with Ministers in May and September respectively this year.

The Government Office will be engaging with Warrington borough council about how best to take forward these issues through the council's development plan.

Arup Economics and Planning

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1557–58W, on Arup Economics and Planning, whether he has received the interim report on regional chambers from Arup Economics and Planning. [213199]

Mr. Raynsford: The interim report is currently being finalised.

Buildings (Liverpool)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister with which conservation bodies he has discussed his current plans to demolish buildings in Liverpool. [213496]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister works with English Heritage, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and other relevant bodies to provide guidance to the housing market renewal pathfinders and other major regeneration initiatives to ensure that historic character and local distinctiveness are used as positive drivers for regeneration and renewal both nationally and in the City of Liverpool.

Communities Plan

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central government plans to spend on the Communities Plan in each year of its implementation. [211935]

Keith Hill: The table provides an annual breakdown of spending on programmes included in the Communities Plan:

	£ million
2003–04	6,754
2004–05	7,658
2005–06	7,865
2006–07	8,209
2007–08	8,802
Total	39,289

Notes:

1. All figures are rounded to the nearest £ million.

2. Totals may not add up, due to rounding.

3. All figures are planned expenditure, except for 2003–04 where out-turn figures are shown.

Fire Service

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received from *(a)* people and *(b)* organisations in Kent about the introduction of regional control rooms for the Fire Service. [211836]

Mr. Raynsford: Four representations have been received from people and organisations in Kent regarding regional control centre—two from MPs, one from Kent Fire and Rescue Service and one from a member of the public.

High Hedges

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress in implementation of the high hedges provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; when constituents will be able to take relevant complaints to their local authority; and when his Department will issue guidelines to local authorities on implementation of the provision. [214208]

Phil Hope: In the light of responses to the consultation that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister conducted on implementing Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, we are currently revising the Regulations and guidance for local authorities. We intend to issue the guidance at the same time as we lay the Regulations before Parliament. We expect the provisions to be fully operational early in 2005, at which point people will be able to make a complaint to their local authority about a neighbouring high hedge.

Leasehold

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party last met; and when it is scheduled to meet next. [214044]

Keith Hill: The working party last met on 16 May 2003. It is to be reconstituted, with a smaller membership and tighter focus, under the chairmanship of LEASE. LEASE's aim is for the first meeting of the new working party to be held in the first quarter of 2005.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place minutes of the meetings of the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party since February 2002 in the Library. [214045]

Keith Hill: It will be arranged that summaries of the minutes of the meetings will be put in the Library of the House, and on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the current work programme of the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party. [214046]

Keith Hill: A new work programme will be discussed at the first meeting of the reconstituted working party. This is expected to include leasehold management and strategic issues relating to Right to Buy.

Ms Oona King: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice his Department has issued on *(a)* the groups of local authority leaseholders who should not be recharged their full share of the cost of capital works on their blocks and *(b)* the loan and repayment options that should be made available to local authority leaseholders re-charged for their share of the cost of capital works on their blocks. [214047]

Keith Hill: In February 1997, the then Department of the Environment issued the Social Landlords Discretionary Reduction of Service Charges (England) Directions 1997 and the Social Landlords Mandatory Reduction of Service Charges (England) Directions 1997. These allow, and in specified circumstances require, local authorities and other social landlords to reduce service charges levied on owners of leasehold flats for repairs, maintenance and improvement carried out to their homes. Guidance to local authorities and other social landlords on reducing service charges to their leaseholders was issued at the same time. Copies of the Directions and the guidance note have been placed in the Library of the House.

The Department issued the Housing (Service Charge Loans) Regulations 1992 giving tenants of flats a right to a loan in respect of service charges for repairs, where the lease was granted under the Right to Buy scheme. The repayment periods for the amounts secured by loans are included in the Regulations. The Regulations were amended by the Housing (Service Charge Loans) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2000. These allowed local authorities to set their own interest rates for discretionary loans. Copies of both sets of Regulations have been placed in the Library of the House. The information booklets for tenants: "Your right to buy your home" and "Thinking of buying a council flat?" published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and its predecessors both refer to the right to a loan.

Performance Assessment

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his Department's expenditure on the *(a)* Comprehensive Performance Assessment and *(b)* Best Value regime was in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [213958]

Mr. Raynsford: The information is as follows:

(a) Resources devoted to supporting the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003–04 included staff within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister working directly on CPA, as well as a proportion of the time of staff across a wide range of other policy areas, and those at senior level, including Ministers with responsibility for local government policy. The total costs of the process will also have included a proportion of those relating to building, heating, lighting and computer equipment as well as stationery, postage and attending and arranging meetings and other events.

It is not possible to identify the overall cost of all this activity. The total cost of staff working full-time on CPA in 2003–04 was approximately £172,248.

(b) The cost to the Office of the Best Value regime amounted to £24,618,868 in 2003–04. This includes:

Grant to the Audit Commission (this figure covers grant for inspections supporting Comprehensive Performance Assessment as well as other Best Value Inspections).

Staff costs.

Grant to the 41 best value parish councils to help them meet the cost of complying with their best value duties for 2003–04 and 2002–03. Principal local authorities also receive support for statutory responsibilities, including best value. However, it is not possible to provide a figure for this support, as the majority of it is provided through formula grant which is unhypothecated to a particular service.

The cost of hosting the BVPI (Best Value Performance Indicators) interactive website and the User Satisfaction Survey website.

Cost of letting contracts for the administration, management and analysis of triennial Best Value User Satisfaction Surveys.

Right to Buy

Mr. Love: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the local authorities whose request to be included within the scope of the Housing (Right to Buy) (Limits on Discount) (Amendments) Order 2003 (Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 498) was rejected; and if he will make a statement. [213896]

Keith Hill: On 22 January 2003, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced that he was minded to lower to £16,000 the prescribed maximum Right to Buy discount limits in 42 areas which appeared to him to be subject to the greatest housing market pressures. He rejected the requests of the following 12 local authorities, that maximum discounts should also be lowered in their areas:

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council
Broxbourne Borough Council
Cambridge City Council
Council of the Isles of Scilly
Luton Unitary Council
Milton Keynes Unitary Council
Sevenoaks District Council
Slough Borough Council
St Albans City and District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
South Oxfordshire District Council
Thurrock Unitary Council

My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister accepted that there were housing pressures in these areas, but was not persuaded at that time that these justified lowering the maximum Right to Buy discounts available to tenants. The authorities were informed by letters dated 6 March 2003.

Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish *(a)* draft and *(b)* final regulations relating to the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act 2004. [213522]

Phil Hope: The 2004 Act expanded the existing powers in the Building Act 1984 to make Building Regulations. Regulations using the new powers relating to energy efficiency will be published in final form in summer 2005. The Building Regulations Advisory Committee is establishing working parties to consider what advice to give to Government on the use of the new powers relating to sustainability and security, with a view to consultation on draft regulations in late 2005 or 2006. Other Regulations will be consulted upon and finalised in due course.

HEALTH

MRI Scans

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to reduce patient waiting times for MRI scans. [213487]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Patients will be offered greater choice in where, when and how they access diagnostic services. By March 2006, the maximum wait for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scan will be 26 weeks, reducing to 13 weeks by March 2007. In addition, national MRI mobile scanning is adding over 15 per cent., more capacity to the national health service, providing up to 131,000 more scans per year by 12 mobile units moving from location to location.

NHS Choice Pilot Schemes

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to provide information to general practitioners on how patient choice will be delivered. [210818]

Mr. Hutton: The Department's delivery framework for choice was published in August 2004 and set out the basis on which strategic health authorities and primary care trusts (PCTs) should plan the delivery of choice and booking. The framework provides specific guidance for PCTs in their development and provision of information to support general practitioners in offering choice. The national health service is now preparing revised delivery plans to demonstrate progress in establishing commissioning arrangements, raising GP engagement and putting in place supporting technology systems. To support this, the NHS "Choose and Book" website at www.chooseandbook.nhs.uk provides a range of information on how patient choice will be delivered and the website www.nhs.uk will be enhanced to provide GPs and patients with comparative information to help them make decisions on choice.

PRIME MINISTER

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Prime Minister what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Office was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211650]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked the Minister for the Cabinet Office my hon. Friend the Member for South Shields, (Mr. Miliband) to reply. A copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Intercept Evidence (Members of Parliament)

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister (1) whether it is his policy that no *(a)* telephone tapping, *(b)* other interception of communications and *(c)* electronic surveillance shall be authorised in respect of hon. Members; [214144]

(2) on how many occasions since 1975, where the interception of communications instigated by hon. Members has been allowed, the interception has not yet been reported to the House. [214145]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Thurrock, (Andrew Mackinlay) on 7 May 2003, *Official Report* column 734W.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many UK military personnel were based at Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan in December 2002; how many had duties in connection with detainees; how many were operating with US forces in connection with detainees; whether any witnessed the killing of or assault upon any detainee; when his Department first became aware of the killing of detainees; and if he will make a statement. [211315]

Mr. Ingram: In December 2002, there was a maximum of nine United Kingdom military personnel based at Bagram Airbase. None of these personnel had any duties connected to detainees and none have ever reported witnessing the killing or assault of any detainees.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what conditions have been applied to the physical integrator contract awarded to KBR in respect of the yard where final assembly of the CVFs will take place. [211432]

Mr. Ingram: No such contract has been awarded to any company. We anticipate announcing the outcome of the process to select the preferred Physical Integrator shortly. The MOD, as client, will retain unlimited right of veto over major decisions on the CVF programme including those relating to final assembly.

British Troops (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out the proposed timetable for withdrawing British forces from Northern Ireland; whether troops will be redeployed; and if he will make a statement. [214268]

Mr. Ingram: There is no timetable for withdrawing British forces from Northern Ireland. The General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland continues to keep the number of personnel in Northern Ireland under regular review so as to provide the optimum support to the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Colombian Army

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Colombian Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal units which receive UK military assistance are *(a)* discrete units and *(b)* integral parts of different Army battalions. [206945]

Mr. Ingram: United Kingdom assistance in improving the Colombian authorities Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) capabilities is provided to selected individuals from a number of Colombian engineer units. We also provide EOD training to selected national police bomb disposal officers.

Correspondence

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes dated 22 September, concerning the Dartmoor Rescue Group. [206827]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 20 December 2004]:* The Ministry of Defence does not take the lead on the provision of search and rescue services in the United Kingdom, including mountain rescue. I am writing to the hon. Member today to explain in more detail the MOD's position regarding mountain rescue operations.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Defence Analytical Services Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the figures were in each case in January 2004; what the personnel costs of the Agency are in 2004–05; and what they were in 2003–04. [212154]

Mr. Caplin: 180 full-time equivalent people worked for the Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) on 1 January 2005, of which none worked in Scotland. The equivalent figures for 1 January 2004 were 170 and none.

DASA's salary budget, including pension costs and ERNIC for 2004–05 is £6.5 million. The outturn figure for 2003–04, was published in the DASA Annual Report and Accounts for 2003–04, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211618]

Mr. Ingram: In calendar year 2003, 47 contracts were placed with EDS, with a value of £62.1 million and of these 29 were open to competition. Nine contracts were placed with Fujitsu, with a value of £22.5 million and two of these were open to competition.

In calendar year 2004, 203 contracts were placed with EDS, with a value of £21.3 million and 56 of these were open to competition. 11 contracts were placed with Fujitsu with a value of £12.2 million and of these three were open to competition.

The table indicates the type of work for which the contracts have been granted:

	EDS		*Fujitsu*	
Type of work	*2003*	*2004*	*2003*	*2004*
Concept	3	—	—	—
Assessment	1	2	—	—
Manufacture	1	4	1	3
In-service	9	9	2	3
Project support	5	1	—	—
External assistance	—	—	—	1
Provision of services	23	187	1	2
Other	5	—	5	1
Not recorded	—	—	—	1

The majority of contracts with EDS for the "Provision of services" were Time and Material orders with a value below £100.

We are not able to provide information regarding contracts placed jointly with EDS and Fujitsu or determine "over what period of time" the contracts have been placed, since to do so would necessitate contacting 22 Integrated Project Teams and this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Typhoon aircraft are in service with the Royal Air Force. [212140]

Mr. Ingram: 10.

Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the likelihood of achieving closure of the Future Strategic Tanker Aircraft project agreements by 31 December. [211463]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is currently considering the progress made to date with AirTanker in single bidder discussions. We expect to make a decision shortly on whether AirTanker Ltd. should be accorded preferred bidder status for this complex and important PFI competition. We shall of course ensure that the House is kept fully informed of significant developments.

General Pinochet

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what contacts the Government has had with General Augustus Pinochet since 1990 concerning military relations with Chile. [207697]

Mr. Hoon: From available records, senior UK military officers visiting Chile briefly met General Pinochet in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army, a position he held between 1990 and 1998, on a limited number of occasions. Two such meetings occurred with the visits in March 1995 of the then Chief of the Naval Staff, and in 1996 of the former Vice Chief of the Defence Staff. In addition, General Pinochet was present at a lunch attended by the then Secretary of State for Defence during his visit to Chile in December 1996. The UK Defence Attaché in Santiago met General Pinochet in the course of routine duties, and other British embassy staff did so at official state and military functions.

Iran

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether classified new equipment was seized from the armed forces by the Iranians on 21 June 2004. [211581]

Mr. Ingram: No.

Joint Service Publications

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of Joint Service Publication 462, Financial Management Policy Manual. [213583]

Mr. Ingram: Yes. An electronic version of Joint Service Publication (JSP) 462 on CD-ROM will be placed in the Library. Hard copies are no longer produced and are, therefore, not available.

Military Manoeuvres

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what manoeuvres or operations United Kingdom armed forces have conducted in *(a)* the Gulf of Guinea and *(b)* the Bight of Bonny since January 2003. [199867]

Mr. Ingram: No operations have occurred in the Gulf of Guinea (Ghana to Angola) and the Bight of Bonny since 2003. The Atlantic Patrol Vessel (South) regularly transited the region over the period making routine port visits on route:

HMS Lancaster/RFA Gold Rover transit July/August 2003

HMS Glasgow/RFA Gold Rover transit November/December 2003

HMS Cardiff/RFA Gold Rover transit April/May 2004

HMS Iron Duke transit September 2004

In addition to this routine maritime activity, the Royal Marines conducted a high profile and extremely successful bilateral Jungle Exercise Western Rhumba in Ghana in September/October 2004.

Military Operating Costs

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average annual operating costs in near cash terms of an *(a)* armoured infantry battalion, *(b)* mechanised battalion, *(c)* air assault battalion and *(d)* light role battalion regular were in financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04. [209338]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the Ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209214]

Mr. Caplin: This information is not held since all cancelled engagements are removed from Ministers' diaries.

Nigeria

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the dates were of each visit conducted by UK military personnel to Nigeria since January 2003. [199868]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom has four military personnel resident in Nigeria. They comprise the Defence Adviser and his assistant; the Commander of the British Defence Advisory Team in Nigeria; and a Liaison Officer to the military staff in the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African States.

To assist those in country, additional UK military officers and civilians visit from time to time. Complete information on the dates of such visits is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Private William Reyes

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the circumstances were of the death of Private William Reyes, service number 5320, at Holdfast camp; what the findings were of the court martial of the solider charged in connection with the fatal shooting; whether a Board of Inquiry was established to look into the circumstances of the death; what the findings were of the civil inquest into the death; and what financial payments have been made to the family of the deceased. [209717]

Mr. Caplin: There is no record of an individual of this name having served with the British armed forces.

Scottish Regiments

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a Black Watch soldier posted away from his battalion following the creation of the Royal Regiment of Scotland will be permitted to wear the Red Hackle. [212106]

Mr. Ingram: It is too early to say what any soldier serving in the new Royal Regiment of Scotland will wear. The Colonel Commandant of the Scottish Division has recently formed a working group to consider future dress matters at which all Battalions, including the Black Watch, will be represented. The recommendations of the working group will be put to the Council of Scottish Colonels for approval in due course.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203917]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203972]

Mr. Caplin: I refer to the answer given on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1259, by my hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Miliband). One special adviser currently has such powers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204286]

Mr. Caplin: I refer to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Swan Hunter

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with Swan Hunter regarding a financial support package; and if he will make a statement. [212107]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 381W. The Ministry of Defence does not provide financial support to the defence industry.

The contract with Swan Hunter for the delivery of two Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) ships to the armed forces was recently amended following difficulties Swan Hunter had in meeting the original programme due to its underestimation of the engineering requirements in the design and construction of the ships. The £84 million revised contract does not offer the company a financial support package but one that offers the best value for money to the taxpayer in the delivery of these ships.

The lead department for policy relating to Government financial support to industry is the Department of Trade and Industry with the responsibility for funding decisions devolved to Regional Development Agencies.

Trident

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the Government's plans are for *(a)* renewing and *(b)* replacing the Trident weapons system; when these plans were last reviewed; how often these plans have been reviewed since 2001; and if he will make a statement. [214242]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 9 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 692W.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* missiles and *(b)* warheads are deployed on Trident submarines; what the approximate yield of the nuclear warheads deployed is; and if he will make a statement. [214376]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 752W.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the role of the Trident programme in combating international terrorism; when this assessment was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement. [214378]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 30 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 577W.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Contracts

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the policy followed by his Department for the award of contracts of a value less than £100,000. [214230]

Hilary Benn: All DFID contracts must be let by trained staff. Contracts of less than £100,000 in value are not formally required to follow the competition process set by the public procurement regulations. DFID does run competition for this business, particularly in overseas markets, where this represents value for money. Where competition would involve a disproportionate cost for lower-value contracts trained staff have authority to negotiate directly with suppliers. DFID also makes increasing use of competitively-tendered central purchasing arrangements and framework agreements for low-value contacts.

Development Science

Mr. McWalter: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made in the establishment of an advisory development science research board; and what mechanisms it will use to solicit representation. [212259]

Hilary Benn: I am setting up a small working group as suggested by the Science and Technology Committee to assess what objectives an "advisory Development Sciences Research Board" might fulfil, what form it might take and what additional funds would be appropriate. Professor Gordon Conway, DFID Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Sir David King, Government Chief Scientific Adviser, and Professor Sir Keith O'Nions, Director General Research Councils, are meeting in the next few weeks to take this forward.

Eritrea

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department is taking with multilateral institutions in Eritrea to combat religious persecution of Christians. [213697]

Hilary Benn: The UK raises the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly. Our chargé d'affaires in Asmara last raised the issue on 18 January and my hon. Friend the Minister for Africa (Mr. Mullin), raised it with President Isaias during his visit to Eritrea in January last year. DFID will continue to make clear our concern.

TREASURY

2001 Census

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the last day for returning the 2001 census form was; how many such forms were issued by the Office for National Statistics (ONS); how many were returned to the ONS; and if he will make a statement. [213192]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Mr. Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 4 February 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the last day for returning Census forms was, how many such forms were issued by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and how many were returned to the ONS. (213192)

Forms had to be received on or before 06 July 2001 to be included in the regular processing system. For forms received after this date special measures were taken to ensure that they were included in the Census archive and that account was taken of them in the final results.

In the three weeks prior to Census day (29 April 2001) Census forms were delivered to 21.7 million occupied households in England and Wales. Approximately 20.4 million of these forms were returned. Where forms were not returned the enumerator submitted a two page "dummy" form containing summary information. This information, together with findings from a large follow-up survey (the Census Coverage Survey), enabled adjustments to be made so as to account for the 1.3 million occupied households that did not return a Census form in the final results.

Enumerators also identified and issued forms to approximately 0.9 million vacant households and second homes. Furthermore approximately 1.0 million individual forms were delivered and returned by people residing in communal establishments such as care homes, prisons and halls of residence. In total, over 24 million forms were issued.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many prosecutions were made for non-completion of the 2001 Census form, broken down by constituency. [213166]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 1 February 2005]*: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Amess, dated 4 February 2005:

As National Statistician and Registrar General for England and Wales, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many prosecutions were made for non-completion of the Census form, broken down by constituency. (213166)

The total number of prosecutions for non-compliance in England and Wales was 39. These are broken down by Parliamentary constituency in the attached table.

2001 Census—England and Wales

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of prosecutions*
England and Wales	39
England	37
North East	—
Blaydon	—
Gateshead East and Washington West	—
North West	5
Blackpool South	1
Cheadle	1
Crosby	1
Macclesfield	1
Southport	1
Yorkshire and the Humber	2
Colne Valley	1
Keighley	1
East Midlands	6
Ashfield	1
High Peak	2
Rutland and Melton	1
South Holland and the Deepings	2
West Midlands	
Mid Worcestershire	—

2001 Census—England and Wales

Parliamentary constituency	*Number of prosecutions*
East	5
Mid Norfolk	1
North East Bedfordshire	1
North East Hertfordshire	1
North Norfolk	1
Saffron Walden	1
London	1
Croydon South	1
South East	4
Bracknell	1
North Thanet	1
Portsmouth South	2
South West	11
Exeter	2
Gloucester	1
North Wiltshire	1
Plymouth Sutton	1
Somerton and Frome	1
South West Devon	2
Totnes	1
Wells	1
Westbury	1
Wales	2
Bridgend	1
Cardiff North	1

Departmental Policies (Burnley)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214702]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented the economic performance of the Burnley constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 46 per cent. and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by over three quarters.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Cancer

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the survival rates for *(a)* all cancers and *(b)* each cancer classified by target organ were in the latest period for which figures are available; and what comparative information he collates on survival rates in other Western nations. [213143]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Dr. Andrew Murrison, dated 4 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what the survival rates for *(a)* all cancers and *(b)* each cancer classified by target organ were in the latest period for which figures are available; and what comparative information is collated on survival rates in other Western nations. (213143)

Cancer survival rates are only produced for specific cancers. A figure giving the overall survival rate for all cancer patients is not produced as it would not be meaningful to combine figures for disparate conditions having very different survival rates.

The latest available one- and five-year survival rates for the 20 most common cancers in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. These figures were published on the National Statistics website on 9th March 2004, and are available at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdatasetasp?vlnk = 7899

Information on cancer survival in other Western nations is available for those countries within the European Union and is provided by the EUROCARE study. This covers parts of the UK and Europe. The most recently published results from this study provide information on survival up to five years after diagnosis for patients diagnosed with cancer during 1990–94 and followed up to the end of 1999. These results were published in:

Berrino, F, Capocaccia, R, Coleman MP, et al. (editors) (2003). Survival of Cancer Patients in Europe: the EUROCARE-3 Study. Annals of Oncology. Volume 14, Supplement 5.

This volume is available online at http://www.annonc.oupjournals.org/content/vol14/suppl_5/index.dtl

Court Fines

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue has been paid to the Exchequer from court fines in England in each year since 1995. [214409]

Dawn Primarolo: The table shows the total amount of fine income collected between 1994–95 and 2003–04. DCA forecast fine income to be £145 million in 2004–05.

Traditionally all income from court fines has been returned to the consolidated fund and re-allocated through the spending review process. However since 2002–03 DCA has piloted a scheme aimed at increasing recovery rates of fines, in order to increase the effectiveness of the punishment as a deterrent. As part of this scheme DCA retain a proportion of the fine income to finance enforcement costs. DCA DEL was adjusted to take account of this new arrangement.

Fine Revenue to the Exchequer—1995 to 2004

	£ million
1994–05	147.6
1995–06	150.4
1996–07	144.3
1997–08	152.1
1998–09	153.5
1999–2000	145.0
2000–01	131.0
2001–02	124.6
2002–03	120.3
2003–04	133.3

Departmental Allocations

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Treasury has given directions to other Government Departments to make provision for a contingency reserve out of their existing departmental allocations; and if he will make a statement. [213961]

Mr. Boateng: The Treasury has recommended, consistent with best practice, that all Departments should set aside a Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) to help them manage any pressures within their agreed spending plans.

Economic Growth

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the projected rate of economic growth in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley is in (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06. [213934]

Mr. Timms: HM Treasury does not produce economic forecasts for individual regions of the United Kingdom. However, I can report that the regional policies this Government have put in place to level up the performance of all regions to that of the best has seen the North West enjoying above UK average growth of GVA per capita in recent years and the highest employment and lowest unemployment since records began.

Employment Statistics

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of *(a)* married, *(b)* cohabiting and *(c)* lone mothers are in (i) part-time and (ii) full-time work. [213897]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. David Willetts, dated 4 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about mothers in employment. (213897)

The attached table gives the estimates of the percentage of mothers with dependent children working full or part-time.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

Percentage of mothers with dependent children working full or part-time; three months ending November 2004

Not seasonally adjusted

		Percentage working:	
Mothers[1] with dependent children[2]		*Full-time*	*Part-time*
Total	7,105,000	28.5	38.4
Married	4,599,000	29.4	42.2
Cohabiting	862,000	30.4	36.6
Lone mothers	1,644,000	25.3	28.6

[1] Aged 16 and over.

[2] Dependent children are those aged under 16 and those aged 16–18 who are in full-time education and have never married.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Euro

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the prevalence of the use of the euro in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [213942]

Mr. Timms: The Government has not made any assessment of euro-based transactions in the UK. Information on the use of the euro in the City of London and UK's external trade was published in Box 6.1 on Page 29 in the "Report on Euro Preparations, December 2004", available in the House of Commons Library.

It is entirely a commercial decision for UK business to determine whether or not they wish to accept the euro or any other foreign currency.

Goodison Review

Mr. Swire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what progress his Department has made in implementing the Goodison Review; [213938]

(2) which of the recommendations of the Goodison Review have yet to be implemented. [213939]

Mr. Timms: In the 2004 Spending Review the Government announced that:

> annual funding for the National Heritage Memorial Fund will double by 2007–08, compared to 2004–05;
>
> the Renaissance in the Regions programme for regional museums will be extended to all nine English regions; and
>
> the free access commitment, which currently covers the main national museums and galleries, and the VAT refund scheme that helps deliver free access, will be extended to university museums and galleries.

Other recommendations relating to tax are being considered as part of our ongoing work. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport also plans to transfer administrative functions to the Museums Libraries and Archives Council (formerly Resource) as recommended by the Goodison Review.

Departmental Policies (Hemsworth)

Jon Trickett: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Hemsworth constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Hemsworth constituency. [214497]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Hemsworth constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 68 per cent. and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have nearly been eliminated, falling by 93 and 94 per cent. respectively.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at Parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/.

Learning and Skills Council

Paul Holmes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason his Department sanctioned the severance payment to John Harwood as Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council. [214227]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury approved the final severance package for John Harwood, former Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Council, on the basis that under the circumstances it represented value for money for the taxpayer.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213812]

Mr. Timms: These costs are not separately identifiable.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide funding to the Department for Work and Pensions to allow it to increase the winter fuel allowance to pensioners. [214003]

Mr. Timms: Winter fuel payments are paid at a level of £200 a year to qualifying households with someone aged over 60 rising to £300 for households with someone aged over 80. This benefits over 11 million households.

The Government are committed to maintaining winter fuel payments at this level for the rest of this Parliament

Pre-Budget Report

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of the measures contained in the pre-Budget report on *(a)* pensioners, *(b)* working families, *(c)* parents and *(d)* unemployed people in Ogmore. [213463]

Mr. Timms: The 2004 pre-Budget report announced increased financial support for working families and for pensioners.

Some 11,300 pensioners in Ogmore will benefit from increases in the Basic State Pension from April 2005. The 3,786 pensioners in Ogmore who currently claim pension credit will benefit from the decision to increase the guarantee element in line with earnings. Those aged 70 or over will also benefit from an extra £50 payment to help with their council tax and other living expenses.

From April 2005 the child element of the child tax credit will increase, in line with average earnings, by £65 to £1,690 a year. Some 3,300 working families with 6,000 children in Ogmore are expected to benefit.

From 1999–2000 to 2003–04 the employment rate in Ogmore rose by 10.9 percentage points to 68.8 per cent. The claimant count unemployment rate in Ogmore fell from 3.7 per cent. to 2.4 per cent. over the same period. Since 1997, the new deal has helped over 1,800 people into jobs in Ogmore.

Saving Plans

Mr. Flight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the estimated total cost to the Treasury would be if the premiums of tax exempt saving plans were raised to £600 per annum; [213190]

(2) when a review of the premium limits of tax-exempt saving plans was last conducted. [213191]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The estimated current cost of tax-exempt savings plans, with an annual premium limit of £300 is around £70 million per year and in recent years this cost has been increasing at an annual rate of about 10 per cent. Increasing the limit to £600 per annum would potentially cost the Exchequer an extra £30 million per year in the long run. Doubling the limit does not double the cost because many tax-exempt savings plan customers do not save at the current maximum.

In line with all taxes and reliefs, the premium limits for tax-exempt savings plans are reviewed on an ongoing basis.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which ministers were not present. [210550]

Mr. Timms: Special Advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213787]

Mr. Timms: The total costs for staff training in the core Treasury, from the ledgers for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are £1,847,521 and £1,906,403 respectively. The Department's accounting system does not make a distinction between training days and development days held away from the Department. Information in respect of the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213849]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's spending on stationery was £380,000 in 2002–03 and £308,000 in 2003–04. The Department's accounting system does not make a distinction between stationery and office supplies. Information in respect of the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tobacco Taxes

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total tax take from cigarettes and cigars and connected products has been in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [214059]

Dawn Primarolo: Duty receipts for tobacco products can be found in the HM Customs and Excise "Tobacco Bulletin", which is available in the Library of the House of Commons and from HM Customs and Excise website address at http://www.uktradeinfo.co.uk/index.cfm?task=bulltobac

HM Customs and Excise do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services.

Tobacco, Alcohol, Pubs and Restaurants (Employment)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people are employed in *(a)* the manufacture and retail of cigarettes, cigars and connected businesses, *(b)* public houses and restaurants and *(c)* the alcoholic drinks industry in the United Kingdom. [214058]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Laurence Robertson, dated 4 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about numbers of people employed in selected alcohol and tobacco-related industries in the UK. (214058)

Estimates of employment by industry are derived from employer surveys and statistics are available on number of jobs, not numbers of people.

Estimates are classified according to the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) 2003. The attached table shows the number of jobs in alcohol and tobacco-related industries in Great Britain, in December 2003, the latest period available.

Number of employee jobs[1] in selected tobacco and alcohol related industries: Great Britain, 2003

	Industry and SIC03 code[2]	*Number*
1600	Manufacture of tobacco products	3,200
5125	Wholesale of unmanufactured tobacco[3]	
5135	Wholesale of tobacco products	3,500
5226	Retail sale of tobacco products	17,200
5530	Restaurants[4]	586,700
5540	Bars[5]	536,600
1591	Manufacture of distilled potable alcoholic beverages	9,800
1592	Production of ethyl alcohol from fermented materials[3]	
1593	Manufacture of wines	500
1594	Manufacture of cider and other fruit wines	1,300
1595	Manufacture of other non-distilled fermented beverages[3]	
1596	Manufacture of beer	18,400
1597	Manufacture of malt	2,200
5134	Wholesale of alcoholic and other beverages	26,500
5225	Retail sale of alcoholic and other beverages	37,400
5117	Agents involved in the sale of food, beverages and tobacco[6]	4,100
5139	Non-specialised wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco[6]	73,700
5211	Retail sale in non-specialised stores with food, beverages or tobacco predominating[7]	1,021,300
5227	Other retail sale of food, beverages and tobacco in specialised stores[7]	28,400

[1] Estimates are rounded to the nearest hundred.

[2] Estimates are classified according to the Standard Industrial Classification 2003.

[3] Estimates are suppressed under the 1947 Statistics of trade, preventing the release of data that may disclose companies.

[4] Estimates include some unlicensed restaurants and cafes.

[5] Estimates include some unlicensed clubs.

[6] Estimates include agents involved in sale of food.

[7] Estimates include jobs in outlets which sell large variety of goods, of which however food products, beverages or tobacco are predominant.

Source:
Annual Business Inquiry 2003.

UK Coins

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost is of minting each UK coin. [213943]

Mr. Timms: The costs of minting individual coins are commercially confidential.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Witness Care

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what monitoring the Crown Prosecution Service carries out of the standard of witness care by the Bar in *(a)* criminal and *(b)* rape trials. [207500]

The Solicitor-General: On their cycle of inspections Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate investigate the quality of the prosecution service as a whole including that provided by the Bar on behalf of the local Area. They do so by monitoring files, advocates and, discussing performance issues with other criminal justice system stakeholders, including the judiciary. They formally report on their findings.

In addition, a number of CPS Areas have in place local, arrangements in respect of monitoring of the Bar in relation to the prosecution of rape trials and criminal trials generally and this includes in some Areas monitoring the standard of witness care provided by counsel. Examples include monitoring of counsel by experienced caseworkers, CPS rape specialists attending for part of the trial to observe, and by addressing monitoring with the Heads of Chambers and at Joint Advocates Selection Committee as appropriate.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what instructions are given to the Bar by the Crown Prosecution Service about dealing with defence applications to cross-examine about previous sexual history in rape trials which are not made in advance of the trial. [207503]

The Solicitor-General: The instructions given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the Bar regarding defence applications to cross-examine complainants about previous sexual history in rape trials are provided in the CPS Instructions to Prosecuting Advocates booklet. The booklet is published on the CPS website www.cps.gov.uk. It states:

> "Sections 41–43 of the Act (restriction on evidence or questions about a complainant's sexual history) were brought into effect on 4 December 2000. The House of Lords has considered this aspect of the legislation in the case of R. *v.* A. (judgment 17 May 2001).
>
> In that case, the House held that prior consensual relationship between the complainant and the defendant might in some circumstances be relevant to the issue of consent. However, all the Law Lords accepted that the complainant must not be treated unfairly. The judgment emphasises "the presumption of exclusion" under the Act. Consequently, advocates should encourage the court to consider section 41 in the context of the judgment overall To do otherwise may lessen the practical effect of the reforms contained in section 41.
>
> It is essential that advocates are robust in dealing with applications under section 41 and that the correct procedure is followed to ensure that inappropriate questioning does not take place.
>
> If the court grants leave to cross-examine a complainant about previous sexual history, it will be essential to review the position relating to special measures. It may be necessary to make an application to the court for one or more of the special measures provided by the Act or to apply to vary a pre-existing direction".

In addition, the CPS instructs experienced counsel in rape cases ensuring that scrutiny of defence applications, if made at trial, to admit evidence of previous sexual history takes place and inappropriate applications are countered, robustly.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what the conviction rate in contested rape trials was in 2004 in *(a)* England and *(b)* the jurisdiction of the Teesside Crown court; [207505]

(2) what percentage of defendants charged with rape pleaded guilty during 2004 in *(a)* England and *(b)* the jurisdiction of the Teesside Crown court. [207506]

The Solicitor-General: The jurisdiction for Teesside Crown court is national. Teesside Crown court is in, Cleveland whose statistics are given as follows.

The conviction rate in contested rape trials in 2004 was 37.7 per cent. in England and Wales, and 27.3 per cent. in Cleveland.

The percentage of defendants charged with rape who pleaded guilty during 2004 was 13.6 per cent. in England and Wales, and 12.5 per cent. in Cleveland.

Departmental Staff

John Mann: To ask the Solicitor-General what percentage of the Law Officers' Departments' staff is based in London. [208032]

The Solicitor-General: Information, on regional distribution of staff is available in the Libraries of both Houses, and also at: http//www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_information/statistical_information/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2003_report/index.asp

Table D shows the numbers of staff by regional distribution.

The figure for HMCPS Inspectorate for the same period, which is not recorded separately in that publication, is 74 per cent. of staff based in London.

Figures relating to 1 April 2004 are due to be published during February 2005.

TRANSPORT

Highways Agency Traffic Officers

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the uniformed Highways Agency traffic officers will be paid; and how much has been spent on recruitment costs to date. [211175]

Mr. Darling: Uniformed traffic officers in the west midlands are paid a starting salary of £16,171, rising to a maximum of £20,200. They receive an additional allowance of up to 20 per cent. for shift working. Rates for the south-east will be determined having regard to market rates.

The overall estimated cost of recruitment is £200,000.

New Car Registrations

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new car registrations there were in the year to 31 December 2004 *(a)* in total, *(b)* by volume and *(c)* by percentage in the (i) AAA: under 100, (ii) AA: 101–120, (iii) A: 121–150, (iv) B: 151–165, (v) C: 166–185, (vi) D.1: 186–200, (vii) D.2: 201–225, (viii) D.3: 226–250, (ix) D.4: 251–275, (x) D.5: 276–300, (xi) D.6: 301–350, (xii) D.7: 351–400, (xiii) D.8: 401–450, (xiv) D.9: 451–500 and (xv) D.10: 501 + carbon dioxide g/km band. [211173]

Mr. Darling: The number of new cars registered between 1 January 2004 and September 30 2004 (the latest month for which figures are available) in total, is 2,107,329. The number of vehicles which would fall into the bands requested are:

Band	*CO_2 range*	*January to September 2004*	*Percentage*
Band AAA	Up to 100	13	0.0
Band AA	101–120	65,359	3.1
Band A	121–150	636,041	30.2
Band B	151–165	458,379	21.8
Band C	166–185	366,085	17.4
Band D1	186–200	159,427	7.6
Band D2	201–225	164,559	7.8
Band D3	226–250	95,371	4.5
Band D4	251–275	43,780	2.1
Band D5	276–300	38,796	1.8
Band D6	301–350	11,285	0.5
Band D7	351–400	5,045	0.2
Band D8	401–450	2,389	0.1
Band D9	451–500	395	0.0
Band D10	500 +	57	0.0
Unknown	—	60,348	2.9
Total	—	2,107,329	100.0

Railway Track Removal (High Marnham/Shirebrook)

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* economic and *(b)* environmental impact assessment has been made of the decision to remove the railway track between High Marnham and Shirebrook. [213722]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Network Rail inform me that no decision has been made to remove this track, which only serves a disused power station and is currently not used by any freight or passenger traffic. Powergen, the owners of the power station, are considering options for the future of the site.

Trust Ports

Mr. Chope: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department supports the harbour revision order application submitted by Dover Harbour Board. [213162]

Mr. Jamieson *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* I will be writing to the hon. Member very shortly setting out the Government's position in respect of recent HRO applications made by Dover and other port authorities to which he has objected.

Tyne Crossing

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make a decision concerning the application by the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority to build a new Tyne crossing; and if he will make a statement. [214229]

Mr. Jamieson: The application by the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority (TWPTA) for an order under the Transport and Works Act to authorise a new Tyne crossing was considered at a public inquiry in March 2003. The Department received the inspector's report in September 2003. However, in February 2004 the TWPTA informed the Department that they were reviewing the powers they needed to implement their scheme and, in September 2004, they formally requested many significant changes to their draft order. In the interests of fairness, other interested parties were given an opportunity to make representations to the Department about those changes. Those exchanges concluded in December and the responses are being considered.

Furthermore, the TWPTA's proposed changes to the order have raised a substantial number of detailed drafting points on which my Department has sought clarification. We still await a response from the TWPTA to the drafting points we have raised. Once we receive satisfactory answers we will make every effort to proceed to a decision as quickly as possible.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Care Workers

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister for Women pursuant to her oral answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 450–51, on pay rates for women employed in social care, what the evidential basis was for her statement on the level of the median female hourly wage; and what the *(a)* average and *(b)* modal hourly figures for pay rates for women in the social care sector are. [213103]

Ms Hewitt: The evidential basis of my statement in my answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 450–51, was the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2004) conducted by the Office for National Statistics.

(a) The average (mean) hourly pay for all women in the social care sector is £10.36.

(b) Modal pay rates are not available from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

Equal Pay

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Minister for Women if she will make a statement on the relative rates of pay for women and for men in Stoke-on-Trent. [213066]

Ms Hewitt: The hourly rates of pay, based on Office for National Statistics data and excluding overtime, in Stoke on Trent Unitary Authority are listed in the table.

	Male		*Female*	
	Median	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
Stoke on Trent				
All	8.35	9.82	6.47	8.04
Full-time	8.56	9.95	7.43	8.42
Part-time	5.48	6.29	5.50	6.62
UK				
All	10.60	13.54	7.95	10.41
Full-time	11.04	13.73	9.46	11.21
Part-time	6.01	9.36	6.27	8.19

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Minister for Women pursuant to her oral answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 450–51, on rates of pay for men and women, what the evidential basis of the figure for the gender pay gap was. [213104]

Ms Hewitt: The evidential basis of my statement in my answer of 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 450–51, was the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (2004) conducted by the Office for National Statistics. The gender pay gap figure of 14.4 per cent. was derived from the difference in the median hourly pay of men and women working full-time, excluding overtime.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Animal Experiments

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what requirements are placed on UK manufacturers to publish *(a)* the number and *(b)* the severity of experimental tests carried out on animals for the purposes of household products; and if she will make a statement. [202830]

Ms Hewitt: There is no requirement for manufacturers to publish such information. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 267–68W, regarding the use of animals in the testing of household products.

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what record is kept by her Department regarding the number of imported products which have been developed using experimental testing on animals. [202832]

Ms Hewitt: There is no requirement for a record to be kept of such products and none is kept. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 267–68W, regarding the use of animals in the testing of household products.

Civil Partnerships Act

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the registration provisions for civil partnerships in the Civil Partnerships Act 2004 will come into force. [213931]

Ms Hewitt: The Government have indicated that the Civil Partnership Act will be brought into force about a year after Royal Assent. A specific date for the commencement of civil partnership will be announced in due course.

Clergy Terms of Service

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Report of the Church of England's Review of Clergy Terms of Service with particular reference to section 23 of the Employment Relations Act 1999. [211882]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have been following the Church of England's review, and I chaired the last meeting of the clergy working group on 26 January 2005, where this was raised. We are keen that the clergy should be appropriately treated, and welcome all proposals that will result in this outcome.

Computer/Video Games

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimate she has made of *(a)* how many children play computer and video games on a regular basis and *(b)* how many hours a week on average children play computer and video games. [211476]

Ms Hewitt: Neither my Department nor the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has estimates of the number of children who regularly play computer and video games, nor the average length of time they spend on this activity.

Energy Bills

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what discussions her Department has had with energy suppliers regarding the *(a)* accuracy, *(b)* comprehensibility and *(c)* timeliness of their bills; and what the outcome has been of those discussions; [213723]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with Ofgem regarding the accuracy, comprehensibility and timeliness of the bills sent by energy suppliers to their customers; and what the outcome has been of those discussions. [213724]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Department has regular discussions with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) and suppliers about a range of consumer issues, including billing. My officials are working with the industry, Ofgem and Energywatch on establishing industry-wide standards that address remaining billing problems. We welcome steps being considered by the companies to make billing easier to comprehend.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of inaccurate energy bills on consumer debt; [213725]

(2) if she will require energy suppliers to provide consumers with a bill based on an actual meter reading at least twice in each calendar year; and if she will make a statement. [213726]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Under legislation the rules governing meter-readings are the responsibility of the independent regulator, Ofgem. Under their supply licences, gas and electricity suppliers are obliged to ensure that customers' meters are physically read and inspected once every two years, although suppliers will seek to read meters more frequently. Where meter-readers are unable to read the meter, the supplier will estimate usage, and this will be reflected in the bill. Customers may provide their own meter readings instead of accepting an estimated bill. The supplier must accept that reading.

Ofgem figures show that, in September 2004, 1,526,349 electricity and 1,289,419 gas customers were repaying debt to their suppliers. Ofgem does not collect data on how many customers are in debt due to inaccurate billing.

Departmental Staff

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time members of staff in her Department, excluding agencies and secondees, are working on issues relating to (i) electricity generation from coal, (ii) electricity generation from gas, (iii) nuclear power and (iv) renewable energy; and if she will estimate what average proportion of their time is spent on these issues. [211781]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The structure of DTI's Energy Group is such that a number of teams handle various cross-cutting issues concerning the supply of energy as a whole, rather than electricity generation from specific energy sources. The division of staff time by fuel type is therefore not readily available.

However, the approximate numbers of full-time equivalent staff working in these areas in January 2005 were as follows:

(i) and (ii) around 60 staff work on issues relating to domestic energy markets (including electricity and other fuel sources);

(iii) around 30 staff work on a range of nuclear issues, primarily decommissioning, safety and security policy. In the Shareholder Executive, approximately four staff monitor the operation of British Energy and British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL), including electricity generation and all other BNFL services;

(iv) around 40 staff work on a number of issues relating to renewable energy.

European Union (Egality)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if she will make a statement on European Communities planned actions in the field of egality, with particular reference to projects arising from COM (2004) 352. [211379]

Ms Hewitt: The UK Government participate in the European Commission's Monitoring Committee on the Fifth Action Programme for Equal Opportunities. This includes projects arising from COM (2004).

Extended Warranties (White Goods)

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on reform of the extended warranty market for domestic electrical goods. [211226]

Ms Hewitt: The Competition Commission report "Extended Warranties on Domestic Electrical Goods" (CM 6089–1) presented to Parliament in December 2003 concluded that the market was not working as well as it should. The Government accepted the Competition Commission findings and following public consultation has taken steps to implement the remedies recommended by the Commission. Measures to reform the market are set out in The Supply of Extended Warranties on Domestic Electrical Goods Order 2005 and related DTI Press Release P/2005/13 issued on 12 January 2005.

Farmers Markets

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will invite the North West Regional Development Agency to assess the contribution of farmers markets to the economy in the North West. [213106]

Ms Hewitt: I have asked the Chief Executive of the Agency to write to my hon. Friend: a copy of the letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Iraq

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the objectives of British commercial policy in Iraq. [213528]

Ms Hewitt: The Government want to see a vibrant private sector in Iraq that will create jobs and economic growth for the Iraqi people in the future. We also want to see UK companies play a substantial role in the reconstruction of Iraq's essential infrastructure. It is essential that the right skills and resources are utilised in the reconstruction process. The UK private sector has many of these.

Mobile Phone Advertising

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether she has discussed with Ofcom the control of advertising of mobile phone services through media products with a high level of readership among children. [213372]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The control of advertising of mobile phone services is not a matter for Ofcom.

The Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (2000) recommended a precautionary approach towards the use of mobile phones by children and recommended that the mobile network industry should refrain from promoting the use of mobile phones by children.

In line with the IEGMP's precautionary approach, the mobile operators reviewed their marketing policies to ensure they do not actively market mobile phones to under-16s.

The report by the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) in January 2005 endorsed this precautionary approach. The Government are currently considering the findings of the NRPB report and will be discussing them with industry, including the recommendation related to promoting phone use by children.

National Minimum Wage

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Bassetlaw residents are benefiting from the national minimum wage. [211004]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is unlikely that figures will be obtainable for Bassetlaw due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. The DTI will provide estimates of National Minimum Wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the House of Commons Library.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will list the official residences for which her Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213607]

Ms Hewitt: My Department is not responsible for any government owned official residences.

Post Office Card Accounts

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the length is of the contract between her Department and Post Office Ltd. for the Post Office card account service. [211996]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

The contract between POL and DWP commenced on the 22 March 2002 and ends on 31 March 2010.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who has assisted her Department in the monitoring of the Post Office card account service. [211997]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

A contract exists between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Post Office Ltd. (POL) for the provision of the Post Office card account service. The contract is managed within DWP by professionally qualified purchasing staff. POL's delivery of the Service to specified requirements is monitored using recognised contract management tools such as regular Service Review meetings, to ensure compliance and early resolution of any issues.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what service standards have been set for the monitoring of her Department's contract with Post Office Ltd. for the Post Office card account service; and who set those standards. [211998]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Three contracts exist between Government Departments and Post Office Ltd. (POL) for the provision of the Post Office card account Service. One contract each with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Inland Revenue (IR) and the Department for Social Development in Northern Ireland (DSD). DWP is responding to this question as the largest user of the Service.

The contracts between POL and the Government Departments contain service standards that were jointly negotiated with POL by DWP, IR and DSD when the provision of Post Office card account banking services was being agreed.

The service standards dictate the level to which the Services shall be provided and cover:

The timely crediting of payments to Account Holders
The return of unapplied Direct Credits
The time taken to open a Post Office card account
Queuing times at Post Office Branches
Call answering times at the Post Office Freephone Call Centre
Availability of the Freephone number
Call answering times at the Post Office Lo-Call Call Centre
Availability of the Lo-Call number
Replacement of a lost/stolen card using the post procedure
Replacement of a card using the urgent replacement procedure
Avoidance of duplicate accounts
Use of Chip/PIN cards
Issue of quarterly statements to account holders
Despatch of replacement PINs
Availability of open Post Office Branches

Software Patent Directive

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the status is of the EU software patent directive; if she will make it her policy to oppose the directive as it stands; and if she will make a statement. [212017]

Ms Hewitt *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The Government support measures to ensure common criteria for patents in this area across the EU and believes it is important to confirm the current position of permitting the patenting of certain types of software-related inventions important to many high tech industries, while preventing a drift towards widening the scope of patentability. We believe the current text achieves this.

The text of the draft Directive is due to be formally adopted by the Council as a "common position". Once it has been adopted it will return to the European Parliament for Second Reading.

Trade Associations

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to encourage trade associations to play a greater role in helping to regulate their industries. [209835]

Ms Hewitt: The DTI continually maintains close and regular contact with trade associations to discuss a range of policy issues, including industry regulation. Trade associations are routinely invited to participate in consultations on new policy and legislative proposals.

Unallocated Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what her latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [213257]

Ms Hewitt: We are currently finalising detailed resource allocations as part of the Department's business planning. Plans for unallocated departmental spending for 2005–08 will be included in the DTI's departmental report, which will be published later this year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bangladesh

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the state of religious freedom in Bangladesh; and if he will make a statement. [211786]

Mr. Alexander: The Bangladeshi constitution recognises Islam as the state religion of Bangladesh, but emphasises that other religions may be practised in peace and harmony. However, we are concerned by the apparent increase in intolerance towards religious minorities, including Hindus and the Ahmadiyya Muslim community, in Bangladesh. We regularly raise these concerns with the Government of Bangladesh, both bilaterally and in partnership with EU colleagues. I did so with the Prime Minister on 21 December during a visit to Dhaka.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports of religious persecution in Bangladesh his Department has received from *(a)* individuals and *(b)* the Bangladeshi Hindu, Buddhist and Christian Unity Council in each year since 1997; what assessment his Department has made of these reports; what discussions (i) he, (ii) members of his Department and (iii) representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the Government of Bangladesh regarding these complaints; and if he will make a statement. [211787]

Mr. Alexander: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, we regularly receive representations on this matter from a number of sources including the Bangladesh Hindu Baudha Christian Unity Council (BHBCUC). Officials in London and Dhaka have regular contact with the BHBCUC—the British High Commissioner in Dhaka met Dr. Bhowmik, General Secretary of the BHBCUC on 22 December. We continue to be concerned about the situation of religious minorities in Bangladesh. I raised these concerns with the Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, on 21 December during a visit to Dhaka. We have regularly raised issues of religious persecution and intolerance with the Bangladeshi authorities, both bilaterally and with EU colleagues. We urge them to ensure minorities are suitably protected, that all incidents are promptly and fully investigated, that the perpetrators of crimes against religious minorities are brought to justice and that firm action is taken against incitement. We shall continue to do so.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairsif he will make a statement on what action he has taken following the bomb attacks on the British envoy in Sylhet, Bangladesh. [212270]

Mr. Alexander: Following the attack on 21 May last year, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made a statement expressing shock at the attack in Sylhet in which three people died and our High Commissioner was injured. A copy of the statement is available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at www.fco.gov.uk/policy/news/press-releases. Specialist officers from the Metropolitan police visited Sylhet shortly after the event to assist the Bangladeshi police with the investigation. They made a second visit to Bangladesh in July and have continued to provide assistance to the Bangladeshi authorities. In our bilateral contacts with the Government of Bangladesh, we have consistently stressed the importance of the investigation reaching a conclusion. I emphasised this point to the Prime Minister on 21 December during a visit to Dhaka.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211661]

Mr. MacShane: The total expenditure by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on external consultants in 1996–97 was £11.8 million and in 2003–04 was £23.2 million.

The vast majority of our expenditure on external consultants is associated with our major Information Communications Technology (ICT) and Estate Construction programmes. Consultants also advise on legal, financial and personnel issues and provide support in areas where we have skills shortages. Increasing expenditure over recent years is largely associated with the growth in our ICT programme which is being used to support change in the organisation. Expenditure on consultants from 2002–03 to 2003–04 has reduced by £0.5 million. We would therefore anticipate expenditure in future years to level out or reduce in line with this trend. Collating forecast expenditure figures for the financial years outlined could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211619]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has had no joint EDS/Fujitsu contracts. Contracts granted to EDS and Fujitsu separately over each of the last two years are listed:

£

EDS *Title*	*Competition*	*Cost*	*Duration*
Network Storage Solution	Yes (through GCAT)*	500,000	29 March 2004–29 March 2007
Fujitsu			
FCONet Phase[1]	Yes (through SCAT)*	1,087,000	28 March 2003–29 March 2007
FCONet Phase[2]	No—single source addition for compatibility reasons, to an earlier contract that was open to competition	2,077,000	
Warning Index OnLine(WIOL)	No—for compatibility reasons this was an addition to a Home Office contract which was open to competition.	2,400,000	2001 April 2003 to 31 March 2005

The FCO seeks to award all of its contracts through open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations, based on best value for money.

Office of Government Commerce Goods and Services Catalogues (GCAT & SCAT).

EU Grants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under which *(a)* budget lines and *(b)* projects UK organisations may apply for money from the European Communities for (i) communications and (ii) information work relating to the Communities. [211411]

Mr. MacShane: The Institutions of the European Union are responsible for their own activities in terms of providing information to the public. Further details can be obtained from the UK Representations of the European Union's Institutions, contact details of which can be found at www.cec.org.uk, www.europarl.org.uk and www.europe.eu.int.

Indonesia

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department's officials have recommended the suspension of arms sales to Indonesia in the last year. [208380]

Mr. Alexander: The advice of officials is an internal matter.

All export license applications for Indonesia are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time.

Iran

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* international organisations and *(b)* non-governmental organisations concerning monitors for the forthcoming Iranian presidential elections. [212069]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not made any such representations. We hope the elections will be free and fair, in line with Iran's international obligations. We will follow closely the election arrangements, including the vetting of candidates.

Iraq

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross concerning their assessment of the (i) nature and (ii) condition of the detention of Dr. Amir al-Saadi since his surrender in April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [212157]

Mr. MacShane: Dr. al-Saadi was being held by US forces as a security internee because he was deemed to pose an imperative threat to security. As such, the International Committee of the Red Cross would have had regular access to Dr. al-Saadi, as they do to all detainees held by the US. Their reports are confidentially passed to the US and Iraqi authorities. Dr. al-Saadi was released by the US on 18 January 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the role played by Amir Al-Saadi in Saddam Hussein's regime from 1981 to 2003; and if he will make a statement. [212198]

Mr. MacShane: Dr. Al-Saadi is well known for his involvement in Iraq's Declaration on Weapons of Mass Destruction to the UN in December 2002. After the collapse of Saddam's regime, the US authorities in Iraq detained him as he was deemed to pose an imperative threat to security. He was released by the US on 18 January 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under whose authority Amir Al-Saadi has been detained since his surrender in April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [212208]

Mr. MacShane: The Multi-National Forces in Iraq have the authority (in accordance with Security Council resolution 1546) to intern individuals who are deemed to pose an imperative threat to security. Dr. Al-Saadi was held by the US until his release on 18 January 2005.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date the Government were first informed of the allegations that the Coalition Provisional Authority had mismanaged funds during the occupation of Iraq. [214062]

Mr. MacShane: Audit reports, conducted by KPMG on behalf of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), on Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) management of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) from 22 May to 31 December 2003 were first released by the IAMB on 15 July 2004.

Although concerns were raised about the contracting of oil sales by the Iraqi State Oil Marketing Organisation and the absence of metering on Iraqi oil pipelines, the main conclusion of the auditor's report was that

> "all known oil proceeds ... have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DFI"

Audit reports by the IAMB are available at www.iamb.info.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what auditing assistance and financial administrative support the Government have *(a)* offered and *(b)* provided to the Coalition Provisional Authority during the occupation of Iraq. [214063]

Mr. MacShane: In the period up to 28 June 2004 up to six UK Government officials, and a team of professional contractors employed by the UK Government, provided financial administrative support to Iraqi Ministries and offices in Baghdad, Basra and the northern Governorates.

The auditing function of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) was carried out by officials and professionals supplied by other members of the coalition, who worked alongside the firm of international auditors employed to undertake the audit of CPA management of the Development Fund for Iraq on behalf of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB). The UK was instrumental in setting up the IAMB, which oversees the auditing of Iraq's oil revenues and their management by the Coalition, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483 of 22 May 2003.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK *(a)* personnel, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* companies are involved in the allegations of mismanagement of Iraqi reconstruction funds by the Coalition Provisional Authority. [214064]

Mr. MacShane: We are not aware of any UK personnel, contractors or companies involved in allegations of mismanagement of Iraqi reconstruction funds by the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the US Special Inspector-General for Iraqi Reconstruction's report into mismanagement of funding for Iraqi reconstruction during the occupation of Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [214065]

Mr. MacShane: We welcome the work by the US Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) which is a necessary measure to ensure transparency and accountability in the spending of Iraqi oil revenues. The SIGIR report examines whether the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) established and implemented adequate managerial, financial and contractual controls over disbursements made to Iraqi Ministries. The report states that CPA accounting procedures were insufficient.

CPA procedures were deficient by the standard of western governments, but the SIGIR report must be considered alongside the following points:

> The difficult operating conditions in Iraq, which meant that procedures were sped up to get Ministries up and running and reconstruction projects off the ground. The alternative would have been to institute a system that could have delayed expenditure for months.
>
> The progress made by the CPA in improving financial management in the Iraqi Ministries and of the budget process. The CPA introduced a transparent framework for management of the national budget and took measures to improve reporting and recordkeeping. But implementing measures took time, which was inevitable given the total lack of transparency under the former regime.

In addition the SIGIR report does not tally with the report by the UN-mandated International Advisory Board (IAMB) into CPA management of the Development Fund for Iraq (FPI). The IAMB was set up to oversee audits of the DFI and ensure that the objectives set forth in UNSCR 1483 were met. Although concerns were raised over the lack of metering of Iraq's oil pipelines and controls over oil sales, it concluded that

> "all known oil proceeds ... have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DFI".

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will work with the US Administration and the Iraqi Governing Authority to *(a)* investigate, *(b)* locate and *(c)* retrieve mismanaged Coalition Provisional Authority funding distributed during the occupation of Iraq found to be the result of fraudulent transactions. [214066]

Mr. MacShane: With respect to the report by the US Office of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR) I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to him today (UIN 214065). The International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) has also reported its main finding in respect of Coalition management of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) that "all known oil proceeds . . . have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DFI". The UK Government will continue to work with the Iraqi Government, the US Administration and the IAMB to ensure the proper and transparent management of Iraq's oil revenues.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information his Department has received concerning the provision of legal representation to Amir Al-Saadi since his surrender in April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [212211]

Mr. MacShane: Dr. Al-Saadi was held by the US authorities in accordance with UNSCR 1546 as he was deemed to pose an imperative threat to security. Our understanding is that the US does not permit access by legal advisers to security internees because their detention is based on sensitive intelligence/security concerns. Dr. Al-Saadi was released by the US on 18 January 2005.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct the UK representation in Sudan to investigate why the National Security Agency of Sudan confiscated all copies of the Al-Mushahid sports paper. [211894]

Mr. MacShane: We regularly highlight the importance of press freedom with the Government of Sudan, and our Embassy in Khartoum will be raising this case at the first opportunity.

West Papua

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government has made to representatives of UK companies with operations in West Papua with respect to the companies' human rights protection, monitoring and reporting policies in the territory. [209004]

Mr. Alexander: The Government has a dialogue with UK companies operating in Papua on a wide range of issues, including human rights. We are not aware of any British company in Papua acting against Indonesian law. We continue to monitor the human rights situation in Papua. We have made our position clear on several occasions, that Papua should be handled according to the Special Autonomy Law 2001, which takes into account the aspirations of the Papuan people and Indonesia's territorial integrity.

NORTHERN IRELAND

MRSA

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether children have contracted MRSA in Northern Ireland. [212172]

Angela Smith: The information requested is set out in the following table.

Number of children in Northern Ireland by age with MRSA isolated from laboratory blood cultures 2000–04

Age	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Total*
0–1	5	4	1	4	1	15
1–2	—	—	—	—	—	—
2–3	1	—	1	1	—	3
3–4	—	—	—	—	—	—
4–5	—	—	—	1	—	1
5–6	—	—	—	—	—	—
6–7	—	—	—	—	—	—
7–8	—	—	—	—	—	—
8–9	—	—	—	—	—	—
9–10	—	1	—	—	—	1
10–15	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	6	5	2	6	1	20

Note:
2004 results should be regarded as provisional as not all laboratory returns are in for 2004.
Source:
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre Northern Ireland

NHS Staff (Recorded Attacks)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* physical and *(b)* verbal attacks were recorded on (i) doctors, (ii) nurses, (iii) auxiliary staff and (iv) administrative staff (A) in hospitals and (B) throughout the NHS in the Province in each year since 2000. [214175]

Angela Smith: The information is not available in the format requested. However, the number of recorded attacks (both verbal and physical) on Health and Personal Social Services staff in all disciplines, during the financial years for which figures are currently available, is detailed in the following table:

	Number
2000–01	1956
2001–02	2438
2002–03	5056

North/South Implementation Bodies

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the costs have been of maintaining each of the North/South implementation bodies since the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly. [210878]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The British Government's expenditure in respect of each North/South Implementation Body for the financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04 is set out in the following table. Separate information is not available for the post-suspension period of 2002–03. Details of expenditure in the current financial year are not yet available.

Body and year	*Cost (£000)*
Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission	
2002–03	1,005
2003–04	675
Waterways Ireland	
2002–03	2,348
2003–03	3,135
Trade and Business Development Body	
2002–03	1,088
2003–04	2,103
Special European Programmes Body	
2002–03	671
2003–04	1,080
The North/South Language Body	
2002–03	3,622
2003–04	3,754
Food Safety Promotion Board	
2002–03	1,251
2003–04	1,592

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 7 February 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture Support

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on Government support for the agriculture industry in the last financial year. [210903]

Alun Michael: The latest published figure for UK expenditure under the Common Agricultural Policy and on national grants and subsidies for agriculture is £3.1 billion for 2002–03[1]. This figure includes direct product subsidies, other subsidies on production, capital grants, transfers, other payments and CAP market support but does not include other expenditure of benefit to farmers and the farming community such as expenditure on animal health, research, advice and education.

[1] *Source:*
"Agriculture in the UK 2003 edition"

Bovine TB

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the levels of bovine TB in North-West Leicestershire. [211158]

Mr. Bradshaw: We do not hold bovine TB surveillance data for individual constituencies. However TB data is available for Leicestershire. At the end of November 2004 there were 3,187 registered cattle herds in the county. Of these, 49 herds (1.5 per cent.) were under restriction at some point between 1 January and 30 November 2004. There were 36 new herd TB incidents during this period, of which 13 have been confirmed to date (three remain unclassified). TB surveillance data for Leicestershire is published each month on Defra's website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/stats/index.htm.

The level of bovine TB in Leicestershire is low in comparison to some other areas of the country, e.g. South West England. We realise the importance of preventing the risk of TB spreading to new areas and that is why we introduced new measures at the end of 2004, e.g. changes to testing frequency and the imposition of movement restrictions immediately a test becomes overdue.

Note:
The data above are provisional and subject to change as more information becomes available. Information was downloaded from the State Veterinary Service database on 17–21 December 2004.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the savings to UK public funds of reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy since their introduction in 2003. [213130]

Alun Michael: The UK contributes to the EU budget as a whole rather than to individual elements, and it is not therefore possible to make precise estimates of savings to UK public funds following the reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy. However, increased financial discipline and setting the CAP budget until 2013 will limit the burden that the CAP places on taxpayers. Cross-compliance and modulation of direct payments into agri-environment schemes means that a greater proportion of public funds are now delivering better value for society by buying public goods not readily provided by the market. The Government will continue to press for further reforms which reduce the cost to taxpayers of the Common Agricultural Policy.

Dairy Farming

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many dairy farms there were in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what the estimated figure is for 2004–05. [211907]

Alun Michael: The following figures show holdings in England where dairy is the predominant activity. Estimates for 2004 are not available.

	Dairy holdings
1994	20,579
1995	19,632
1996	18,904
1997	18,007
1998	17,014
1999	16,313
2000	15,219
2001	14,106
2002	14,342
2003	13,556

Note:
Figures prior to 2000 show main holding only. From 2000 onwards minor holdings are included.
Source:
June Agricultural Census

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farm workers were employed on dairy farms in England in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what the estimated number is for 2004–05. [211908]

Alun Michael: The figures as follows show the number of workers on holdings in England where dairy is the predominant activity. The figures include casual and family workers but exclude farmers, partners, directors and salaried managers. Estimates for 2004 are not available.

	Workers on dairy holdings
1994	25,976
1995	25,196
1996	24,273
1997	22,9[illegible]1
1998	20,210
1999	17,941
2000	15,477

	Workers on dairy holdings
2001	13,934
2002	13,961
2003	12,717

Notes:
(a) Figures prior to 2000 show main holdings only. From 2000 onwards minor holdings are included.
(b) Due to a register improvement exercise in 2001 labour figures prior to this are not directly comparable with later results.
Source:
June Agricultural Census

Departmental Grants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which councils have benefited from support under *(a)* the Vital Villages Scheme, *(b)* the Quality Parish Scheme and *(c)* the Market Towns Initiative since 2001. [213135]

Alun Michael: Each of these programmes has directed grants to communities, town and parish councils, service providers and regional partnerships, not to local authorities.

The list (annex 1) sets out the councils whose areas have benefited from support under the Vital Villages Scheme and the Market Town Initiative, and those town and parish councils, which have been supported under the Quality Parish Scheme. The list will be made available in the Library of the House.

Fallen Stock Disposal Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of farmers have registered with the Fallen Stock Disposal Scheme; and if she will make a statement on its *(a)* introduction and *(b)* running. [211625]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company is pleased with the response it has had from farmers to the scheme with over 20,000 members in the UK joining in the first eight weeks.

It is not possible to express this as a percentage of all farmers as only some farmers have livestock and one farm business may cover a number of livestock holdings. Although, as the company expected, there have been some teething problems while the Scheme is bedding in, this is an encouraging start.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers have signed up to the National Fallen Stock Company. [211640]

Mr. Bradshaw: The National Fallen Stock Company has reported that as of the 31 January 2005 some 20,464 members had been registered across the UK.

Farm Incomes

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average level of farm income has been in each year since 1987. [213153]

Alun Michael: Information on Total Income from Farming (TIFF) per full-time person equivalent for the years 1987 to 2004 is given in the following table.

Real-terms (2004 prices)

	TIFF/head (£000)
1987	13.4
1988	12.7
1989	13.3
1990	11.6
1991	12.5
1992	16.0
1993	21.6
1994	23.4
1995	27.0
1996	24.7
1997	14.7
1998	10.3
1999	10.6
2000	8.2
2001	9.3
2002	12.0
2003	16.0
2004	14.8

Total Income from Farming (TIFF) is income generated by production within the agriculture industry, including subsidies. It represents business profits plus remuneration for work done by owners and other unpaid workers.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which types of farmers are eligible for single payment scheme hardship payments for agri-environment participants. [211727]

Alun Michael: Farmers whose production was adversely affected in the reference period 2000–02 by participation in an agri-environment scheme can apply (up until the deadline of 28 February) to have the affected years for affected subsidy schemes ignored when calculating their entitlements under the single payment scheme.

Fish Quotas

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what the status is of the proposals contained in the consultation document issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, dated 11 June 1998, headed Fixed Quota Allocations for Domestic Waters (Areas IV, VI and VII): [213883]

(2) whether the Department's policy on the feasibility and desirability of collecting and maintaining at individual vessel level comprehensive data on the catches made by under 10 metre PO members remains as set out in Annex B, section 8 of the consultation document issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, dated 11 June 1998, headed Fixed Quota Allocations for Domestic Waters (Areas IV, VI and VII). [213884]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible. The letter of 11 June 1998 communicates the Ministerial decision that a system of fixed quota allocations (FQAs) should be introduced in domestic waters from 1 January 1999. This decision was preceded by extensive consultation with the fishing industry.

The position set out in the letter, regarding the management of under 10 vessels through producer organisations (POs), was changed following a review of the operation of the FQA system in consultation with industry in 2000–02. As a result of that review Fisheries Departments decided that under 10 metre vessels should, for the first time, be permitted to fish against "sectoral" quota allocations managed by POs as an alternative to fishing against the "pool" quota allocations for the under 10 metre fleet which are managed by Fisheries Departments in consultation with industry. The owners of the small proportion of under 10 metre vessels who elect to fish against PO allocations are required to complete EU logbooks and submit landing declarations in the same way as vessels over 10 metres. The new arrangements were communicated to fishermen in August 2002.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many areas in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* France, monthly cod quota allocations are imposed on individual vessels operated by under 10 metre PO members; and when those limitations were imposed. [213885]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Within the UK under 10 metre vessels whose owners elect to fish against quota allocations managed by producer organisations (POs) are not subject to monthly catch limits set by Fisheries Departments. I understand that in France, unlike in the UK, all under 10 metre vessels whose owners wish to fish for quota stocks are required to join a PO and to observe any catch restrictions which their PO may set. We do not have details of those restrictions.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what legal instruments set out her Department's powers to impose monthly quota allocations in the Channel fishery (ICES area VIId) in respect of and landings by individual vessels in the under 10 metre fishing fleet; when those instruments were promulgated; when they were first published; and when they came into force; [213886]

(2) what the legal basis under *(a)* Community law and *(b)* domestic law is for establishing monthly quota allocations in the Channel fishery (ICES area VIId) in respect of cod landings by individual vessels in the under 10-metre fishing fleet. [213882]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Council Regulation (EC) No. 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002 provides (Article 20 (3)) that each member state shall decide on the method of allocating fishing opportunities (in the form of portions of its national quotas) to its vessels. Sub-section 4 (6) of The Sea Fish (Conservation) Act 1967 (c. 84) stipulates that fishing vessel licences may be

> "... subject to such conditions as appear to the Minister granting the licence to be necessary or expedient for the regulation of sea fishing".

Monthly catch limits for vessels under 10 metres catching cod in ICES area VIId and other parts of the Channel fishery were first introduced in June 2002. The holders of fishing vessel licences for such vessels were formally notified of the limits by letter of 28 May 2002 enclosing licence variations, following which the catch limits became an enforceable condition of their licences. Subsequent changes to the limits were similarly notified: these included the introduction for 2003, following representations from fishermen, of separate "profiled" catch limits for the Eastern and Western Channel, details of which were sent to fishermen on 20 January 2003.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what *(a)* consultation documents and *(b)* other communications have been published by her Department since 11 June 1998 concerning the collection at individual vessel level of data on the catches made by under 10 metre PO members; [213860]

(2) what representations her Department has received from *(a)* fishermen and *(b)* fishermen's representatives since 11 June 1998 in relation to (i) the collection at individual vessel level of data on cod catches made by under 10 metre PO members and (ii) the imposition of monthly quota allocations for individual vessels operated by those members exploiting waters in Area VIId. [213861]

Mr. Bradshaw: In June 2000, following requests from industry, Ministers announced that arrangements would be considered to enable producer organisations (POs) to manage quota on behalf of under 10 metre vessels in their membership. As part of a wider review of the system of fixed quota allocations (FQAs), a consultation letter was sent to fishermen and other interested parties on 8 October 2001 proposing, among other changes, that the owners of under 10 metre vessels should be permitted to fish against quota allocations managed by POs, and that those vessel owners opting to do so should maintain logbooks and submit landing declarations. This proposal was supported by the majority of those who commented and was accepted by Ministers, whose decision was notified to fishermen in August 2002. Since then correspondence has been received from a relatively small number of under 10 metre vessel owners in the form of requests to participate in the new arrangements.

Under 10 metre vessels fishing against quota allocations managed by POs are not subject to monthly catch limits set by Fisheries Departments, but to such restrictions as their POs may determine.

Meat Imports

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Food Standards Agency about the quality of meat imported from *(a)* Brazil and *(b)* Argentina; and if she will make a statement. [211626]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have not discussed this issue with the Food Standards Agency. All fresh meat imported into the UK must conform to EU rules.

Methane Emissions

Mr. Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what estimate she has made of the percentage of worldwide methane emissions that arise from the *(a)* processing, *(b)* transmission, *(c)* storage and *(d)* distribution of natural gas in the UK; [211302]

(2) what estimate she has made of the annual level of methane emission in the UK arising from the *(a)* processing, *(b)* transmission, *(c)* storage and *(d)* distribution of natural gas for each of the last five years; [211304]

(3) what international comparisons she has made of the annual level of methane emissions arising from the *(a)* processing, *(b)* transmission, *(c)* storage and *(d)* distribution of natural gas. [211305]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 27 January 2005]*: These categories of emissions are counted together in the UK greenhouse gas inventory under the entry for Natural Gas Transmission and Distribution. The table shows data for the years 1998 to 2002 inclusive.

UK emissions of methane from natural gas transmission and distribution

	(thousand tonnes of methane)
1998	348.7
1999	349.0
2000	335.6
2001	342.8
2002	338.6

These estimates represent around 1.3 per cent. of global anthropogenic methane emissions for these categories of emissions for the years in question, and these emissions in turn are estimated to have been around 10 per cent. of total global anthropogenic methane over the same time period. The international comparisons draw on data compiled by the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency.

Mr. Paul Joy

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the evidential basis was of the public statement made by Andus Radford, district fisheries inspector, that the fine imposed on Mr. Paul Joy amounted to a quarter of his income for the month of September 2003. [213859]

Mr. Bradshaw: No such statement was made. In a radio interview Mr. Radford commented as follows:

> "During the month we took the offences, there were a number of other species that were available to the fishermen and cod was only one of a number of species they could fish off the beach for in Hastings and in fact it only constituted about one quarter of their income for that particular month."

The month in which the offence occurred was in fact October 2003. Mr. Joy was fined £4,996, of which £1,496 related to the value of the cod which was illegally landed.

National Parks

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the guidance issued to the national parks on the encouragement of people from the inner cities to use the parks. [211297]

Alun Michael: As part of the funding process for national parks I indicate my priorities to park authorities and I shall be writing to national park authorities about this shortly. We are encouraging them to actively promote understanding and greater use of national parks by all sections of society, especially people with disabilities, people from ethnic minorities, the inner cities and young people. We want our national parks to be appreciated fully by all sections of society as truly national assets. Defra and the Department for Education and Skills are working with national park authorities to develop initiatives to meet this aim. I also emphasised the Government's position on this policy of inclusion at a meeting with national park authorities on sustainable tourism in June 2003 so they have been aware of it for some time. I have also made clear that these ends can be achieved without excluding existing users groups and that we will encourage increased engagement of volunteers in meeting national park purposes.

National park authorities will also benefit from the findings of Defra's Diversity Review which is looking at what can be done to provide more opportunities for people who, for various reasons, have little experience of what the countryside has to offer. An action plan will be published next year. In addition, many park authorities were involved in the Mosaic Project set up by the Council for National Parks and the Black Environment Network in 2001 to enable people from black and ethnic minorities to experience the parks at first hand. The Council for National Parks recently secured lottery funding to develop this project further over the next three years.

The Government are providing adequate resources for the national park authorities. Funding for the authorities in 2005–06 is 51 per cent. above the 2001–02 level. Each authority receives £200,000 each year to run a sustainable development fund, to make grants to projects which aim to change the attitude and behaviour of individuals and communities in ways that enhance understanding of sustainable development and the role of the national park while promoting cooperation and social inclusion.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to require national parks to discontinue activities in order to perform the new duties detailed in the guidance recently issued by her Department to national parks. [211298]

Alun Michael: Our policy is to expand interest in national parks so that they are understood by all communities, as intended, as a genuinely natural asset. Initiatives like the Mosaic project have successfully engaged members of Asian and Black communities in the attractions of visiting several national parks, but there is a long way to go. From my own experience as a youth worker in Wales and from visits to English national parks in the past nine years, I can testify to the value and impact of such visits on inner city youngsters in particular.

In expanding interest in the national parks to new groups, we have no wish whatsoever to see a reduction in the groups who already make use of these invaluable national assets and I am keen to see the engagement of volunteers expanded rather than reduced.

In order to support the work of the national parks in England we have significantly increased the level of grant—by 51 per cent. since 2001–02—to a sum of £42.13 million in 2005–06. Also each national park has a sustainable development fund of £200,000 per year to encourage innovation with a particular emphasis on linking the concept of sustainable development to the national parks and engaging people—particularly young people—from urban and rural areas in joint projects in the national park.

Even with these additional resources the pressures on each national park is considerable. Each authority has to deal with conflicting pressures, and also identify whether any of their services are already being provided, or could be done better, by others. The introduction, later this year, of a streamlined Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Best Value regime for the national park authorities will help to identify priorities and improve cost-effectiveness.

Nitrogen

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she requires to be taken in areas where declared levels of nitrogen in the air exceed accepted levels; and if she will make a statement. [210659]

Alun Michael: Actions to reduce exceedences of nitrogen dioxide, as those for many other air pollutants, are required at international, national and local level. The UK is party to a number of international obligations to reduce air pollution that requires reduction in emissions from all sectors. The Government has set out national policies to improve air quality in the Air Quality Strategy for England published in January 2000 and its Addendum published in February 2003. At local level the Government requires local authority to review and assess air quality locally and take actions (such as for example by using their traffic management powers) in cooperation with others if necessary, if they are unlikely to meet air quality objectives such as those for nitrogen dioxide; The Governments Air Quality Strategy and Guidance for Local Authority on Local Air Quality Management, including on local action planning, can be found at www.defra.gov.uk.

Sugar

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the impact of recent EU liberalisation of sugar production in its member states on *(a)* relations between the smaller and larger economic powers in the World Trade Organisation and *(b)* the economies of (i) African and (ii) Caribbean sugar producing economies; and if she will make a statement. [213235]

Alun Michael: No recent decisions have been taken on reform of the EU sugar regime. The European Commission published a Communication in July 2004 setting out its preferred approach in the light of discussion of its earlier September 2003 Communication analysing a range of possible options, including their potential impacts on international trade. In addition to providing information on these papers for UK Parliamentary Scrutiny purposes and giving evidence to the Efra Select Committee inquiry on sugar reform, the Government have commissioned and published independent economic research on the implications for the EU's existing preferential suppliers. Further impact assessments will be made available once the Commission comes forward with formal legislative proposals, which are not now expected until May or June.

Veterinary Surgeons Act

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to review the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966 with a view to introducing new legislation. [214007]

Mr. Bradshaw: This Department published its proposals to modernise the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, in a consultation document, in September 2003. We had a positive response from a wide-range of stakeholders. A summary of the responses and an analysis has been published on our website.

We hope to introduce a new Veterinary Surgeons Bill as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211331]

Alun Michael: The Defra Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board on 31 October 2002. As required by the terms of the scheme, Defra's scheme was implemented three months after the date above.

Woodland Grant Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her plans for a replacement for the Woodland Grant Scheme. [211603]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Forestry Commission announced in March 2004 that the English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) would replace the Woodland Grant Scheme in 2005. The EWGS, which is expected to be fully open for applications from July, comprises six elements which are designed to support the establishment and management of sustainable woodland. These are:

"Woodland Creation Grant" to support the creation of properly designed and well located new woodlands.

"Woodland Assessment Grant" to support the gathering of specific information to improve management decisions.

"Woodland Management Planning Grant" to support the preparation of plans that meet the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.

"Woodland Management Grant" to support the basic management activities that underpin woodland sustainability.

"Woodland Regeneration Grant" to support desirable changes in the delivery of public benefits from woodland.

"Woodland Improvement Grant" to create and sustain an increase in the quality of woodlands.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what action his Department has taken to ensure that *(a)* Dalits and *(b)* indigenous peoples benefit from the UK aid money to the region affected by the tsunami; and what (i) funds and (ii) programmes are specifically earmarked for (A) the Dalit community and (B) indigenous people in that region; [213216]

(2) what *(a)* funds and *(b)* programmes funded by his Department for the region affected by the tsunami have a specific focus on (i) women, (ii) orphans and (iii) older people; [213217]

(3) if he will list the *(a)* funds and *(b)* programmes delivered by his Department on a (i) unilateral, (ii) bilateral and (iii) multilateral basis for the region affected by the tsunami which have a specific focus on enabling women to participate fully in the reconstruction of their communities. [213218]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In all its humanitarian responses, DFID works to ensure that the activities of the humanitarian community are informed by a solid analysis of the specific needs of the affected population. This requires assessment of and response to specific vulnerabilities and vulnerable groups, including women, orphans, the elderly, and, in the Asian context, the Dalit community, and indigenous people in the region. In addition, DFID humanitarian funding is often directly targeted at such groups. Following the Indian Ocean disaster, DFID has channelled £400,000 through the Save the Children Fund and £2,250,000 through the United Nations Children Fund to support orphans and other vulnerable children. The activities of the United Nations Children Fund are also targeted towards pregnant and lactating mothers. In addition, DFID has channelled £483,054 through Help Age International.

DFID is aware that social exclusion and discrimination on the grounds of gender, caste, ethnicity or religion constrain access to resources by some of the poorest people in Asia. DFID has made a public commitment in its Asia Director's Delivery Plan and Country Assistance Plans to ensuring that reduction of social exclusion is explicitly addressed in all its Asia programmes. DFID also regards the empowerment of women as an essential precondition for the elimination of poverty and the upholding of human rights.

DFID promotes an inclusive approach to ensure that no groups are excluded from mainstream programmes. DFID seeks to address the causes and consequences of exclusion and encourages disagregation of data by Governments in the region, where possible, to ensure that programmes are in fact reaching the poorest marginalized groups and to identify where programmes are failing.

DFID works with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations in the poorest areas that advocate the rights of excluded groups. In India, DFID is currently supporting the development of a system to assess how well social exclusion is being addressed in the tsunami relief programme. Many NGOs, including some that are not receiving DFID funding have asked to be involved in this auditing scheme.

Experience suggests that real change cannot be imposed by outside agencies. Recipients of aid, whether they are individuals, groups or Governments need to be convinced of the need for social inclusion.

Burma

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* nature and *(b)* impact of development projects undertaken in Burma since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211772]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID withdrew its bilateral development support to Burma in 1988 as a response to the military takeover that year. In 2001, when the view of the political situation in Burma took a more optimistic turn, DFID worked towards reviving its programme.

It is clear that progress towards a political settlement in Burma is an essential ingredient for significant pro-poor development and until such progress is made large-scale, sustainable poverty reduction will remain out of reach. However, as is explained in the DFID Burma Country Plan (available at www.dfid.gov.uk) we continue to believe that in certain areas, we can have a valuable impact on poverty in Burma.

In 2003–04, as part of its work to prepare the Country Plan, DFID reviewed its experience of working in Burma and consulted widely with colleagues including FCO, civil society groups inside and outside Burma, the National League for Democracy the UN and other donors. Some key lessons identified by this work included: the need to be realistic about what we seek to achieve; the importance of taking a long-term approach; that it can be possible to influence Government policy in certain areas; and that donors need to, and can, work better together in Burma to share lessons and experience to increase our impact.

Since then DFID has worked with the UN, NGOs and other donors to develop programmes under the Country Plan objectives such as on HIV and AIDS, health, education and livelihoods of poor people.

The first review of progress with implementing the new Country Plan will take place by the end of 2005. This will draw on reports on the progress and impact of the programmes we are funding in Burma.

Guyana

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what cash donations for emergency aid the Government have given to Guyana *(a)* through the EU, *(b)* through non-governmental organisations and *(c)* directly, following the recent flooding; and if he will make a statement; [213900]

(2) what technical assistance and advice the Government have given to Guyana following the recent flooding; and if he will make a statement. [213899]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development has given a total of £376,000 to help the victims of the recent floods in Guyana.

This has comprised an immediate £100,000 to the Government of Guyana's own relief effort and to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the delivery of emergency supplies. These funds are providing water purification sachets and water containers, survival items such as blankets and treated mosquito nets to reduce the chances of malarial infection.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) has received £120,000 from DFID for a 20-member rapid response unit using six boats to help with the distribution of supplies in areas cut off by the floods. The RNLI team arrived in Georgetown on Wednesday 2 February, and have started their work.

A further £57,000 has been allocated to the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) to help improve the quality of drinking water for up to 195,000 people and offer solutions for human waste disposal.

The UK has also made £99,000 available as part of our contribution to the European Commission's Humanitarian (ECHO) assistance. The UK's share of EC assistance is 18 per cent.

ECHO has provided a total of £552,000[1] worth of relief supplies and programme assistance for water and sanitation through the International Federation of the Red Cross, PAHO, and Oxfam.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* technical assistance, *(b)* advice and *(c)* cash donations the Government have given to the Caribbean for disaster management following (i) Hurricane Ivan and (ii) the recent floods in Guyana. [213903]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The events of last year's hurricane season in the Caribbean, has given an added urgency to the Department for International Development's (DFID) work on a Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy. There are best practice lessons to be learnt from within the region, for example in its preparedness for Hurricane Mitch and Cuba demonstrated that lives can be saved with a relatively small amount of resources. DFID's Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy, will be ready by autumn 2005, and will feed into our assistance plans for all the countries and regions where we work.

Over the period 2003–08, DFID is providing £3.75 million to the Pan American Health Organisation's Programme for Emergency Preparedness and Disaster Relief (PAHO PED). Of this money approximately a third will be allocated to the countries and territories of the Caribbean. PAHO PED focus on three key activities:

- preparing the health sector for disasters
- reducing the vulnerability of hospitals
- reducing the vulnerability of water and sanitation systems.

PAHO PED have also trained many professionals in the Caribbean region on disaster risk reduction policy and practice.

DFID's Overseas Territories Department (OTD) have a Disaster Management Adviser based in the Caribbean and an ongoing disaster management programme (£350,000 per annum) with an emphasis on strengthening preparedness and risk reduction capabilities in the Caribbean Territories.

The FCO has a £55,000 per annum Good Governance Fund (GGF) disaster management project for the Overseas Territories (OTs) designed to raise the capacities of National Disaster Offices in the Caribbean OTs.

Within these programmes DFID OTD and FCO OTD are providing £80,000 to the Caribbean Disaster Emergency and Response Agency (CDERA) to facilitate national performance evaluations by Caribbean countries affected in the 2004 hurricane season. A high level forum is being organised for 2005 to share experiences, to identify opportunities to improve disaster planning and to agree an action plan. Evaluations are already under way.

The DFID and FCO OT programmes have allocated £30,000 for emergency supplies and capacity building of British Red Cross OT Branches in the Caribbean for 2005.

In a written response I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, North (Jeremy Corbyn) on 25 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 989W, I mentioned that DFID OTD had commenced a study to determine Hurricane Ivan storm characteristics and consequential physical infrastructure damage in the Cayman Islands. The study, to which we have allocated £20,000, will aid the development of planning and preparedness criteria throughout the region.

The disaster management adviser offers direct technical assistance to Caribbean Overseas Territories. He remains engaged and involved in the longer-term recovery and risk reduction programme in the Cayman Islands.

With respect to the ongoing flooding emergency in Guyana, which is estimated to have affected 294,000 people or 39 per cent. of the population of Guyana, DFID immediately gave a total of £100,000 to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for the delivery of emergency supplies and the Government of Guyana's own relief effort. This support will provide water purification sachets and water containers, and survival items such as blankets and treated mosquito nets to reduce the chances of malarial infection.

DFID has also made available a 20-member six boat team from the Royal National Lifeboat Institution's (RNLI) Rapid Response Unit. This team is led by a member of DFID's Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department, and will help with the distribution of supplies in areas cut off by the floods. The estimated cost of the RNLI initiative is £120,000, which includes the provision of 400 pairs of waders and 50 loudhailers (worth £15,000). The RNLI team and these supplies arrived in Georgetown on 2 February 2005. The RNLI team began work immediately and the supplies have been handed over to the Government of Guyana's Civil Defence Commission.

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[1] €800,000 at an exchange rate of 1:£0.69

A further £57,000 has been allocated to the Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) in Guyana, to help improve the quality of drinking water for up to 195,000 people/35,000 households and offer short-term solutions for human waste disposal.

The UK has also made £95,000 available as part of our contribution to the European Commission's Humanitarian assistance.

Once the immediate emergency has passed, we will work with the Government of Guyana, local and international relief agencies, to review and assess Guyana's disaster preparedness and the lessons learned from these floods.

Iraq

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the objectives of British development and aid policy in Iraq. [213581]

Hilary Benn: The objectives of DFID's programme in Iraq are: to promote rapid, sustainable and equitable economic growth; to encourage effective and accountable governance, and to promote social and political cohesion and stability.

In meeting these objectives, DFID is:

supporting Iraq's newly emerging public administration in delivering effective government to the people of Iraq; and providing advice and security support to the Iraqi electoral commission;

assisting macro-economic management in Iraq, including the design of effective economic reform measures which safeguard the interests of the country's poorest and most vulnerable citizens;

providing direct assistance in southern Iraq for infrastructure rehabilitation, employment generation, and building up the capacity of local government;

supporting the development of Iraqi community organisations and public participation in the political process;

financing training for the judiciary, and supporting the development of independent media;

supporting the multilateral effort for Iraq through the World Bank and the United Nations in a number of sectors including health, education, power supply and support for returning refugees and their host communities.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what financial help has been given to the Iraqi Government by the United Kingdom to help towards the cost of rebuilding the city of Fallujah; and if he will make a statement. [213741]

Hilary Benn: The United Kingdom is not providing financial assistance for the reconstruction of Fallujah. $100 million has been allocated from the Iraqi budget for reconstruction work in Fallujah, and United States agencies report that they have planned around 100 reconstruction projects in the Fallujah area worth a total of over $84 million. DFID staff and consultants have made assessment visits to Fallujah and provided advice to the Iraqi Government on the management of health, humanitarian and coordination issues.

Israel

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid was received by Israel for *(a)* humanitarian and *(b)* military purposes from (i) the Government of the United Kingdom and (ii) other sources from the United Kingdom in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [211761]

Hilary Benn: No humanitarian or military aid has been given by the UK Government to Israel since 1997, other than to fund the attendance of one Israeli participant annually on a military training course at the Royal College of Defence Studies. We do not track the exact amounts of aid from other sources.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that he has cancelled since 1 January 2004. [209226]

Hilary Benn: Details of cancelled ministerial engagements are not recorded, therefore the information requested cannot be provided.

Rwanda

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether it is his policy to withhold aid from Rwanda if he receives evidence of attacks by Rwandan forces on groups seeking to destabilise the country, with particular reference to the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe. [213099]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government are Rwanda's major bilateral development partner. Our engagement with the Government of Rwanda is based on the UK/Rwanda Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU describes the Government of Rwanda's commitments to the Rwandan people on poverty reduction, promoting regional stability, creating a democratic and inclusive state, and progressively securing human rights. The Government of Rwanda's undertakings include commitment to playing a full part in international and regional initiatives to prevent and reduce conflict within and between countries and establish peace in central Africa.

The MoU confirms that the UK's engagement depends on continuing progress in these areas. Should we believe that the Government of Rwanda are not honouring the commitments made in the MoU, the UK's programme of assistance to the Government of Rwanda may be reconfigured or suspended.

DFID is concerned by reports that Rwanda planned to mount a cross-border operation in DRC against elements of the ex-FAR and the Interahamwe (ex-FAR/I). Any military action by Rwanda in DRC would have very serious repercussions for Rwanda, DRC and the region as a whole. DFID has urged all parties to refrain from any actions that would breach international law and undermine regional stability and the work of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC). We therefore welcome the recent statements by the Government of Rwanda indicating that they will not pursue cross-border military action and will support international efforts to disarm the ex-FAR/I in eastern DRC.

DFID condemns the attacks made by the ex-FAR/I against Rwandan citizens and territory and also recognises that the disarmament of the ex-FAR/I is a critical requirement that needs to be addressed urgently. We are working actively with the UN and international partners on how this can best be addressed.

Water Supplies

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the role of private companies in the provision of water in developing countries. [213484]

Hilary Benn: DFID believes that the private sector can play a positive role and contribute to poverty alleviation through bringing gains in productivity, efficiency and quality of service delivery if its involvement is appropriately structured and regulated and includes mechanisms for public consultation. Specific decisions about the use of the private sector are for developing countries to take.

DFID's research in this area has studied the role of non-state service providers and public-private partnerships in order to support developing country governments to strengthen their regulatory structures and institutions to this end.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with the Government of Ghana about their citizens' access to clean water. [213497]

Hilary Benn: During my visit to Ghana in March 2004 I visited Nima, a deprived suburb of Accra, and talked to residents and officials of the Government of Ghana about the problems of poor urban water supply and plans to introduce private sector participation. Since then DFID has been in negotiation with the Government of Ghana on a contribution of £7.7 million which we intend to allocate to improvements in urban water networks.

Access to clean water is a key indicator of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals in Ghana, and measures to increase such access are included in the dialogue about overall performance that informs the release of Poverty Reduction Budget Support by DFID and other donors.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what monitoring procedures the Crown Prosecution Service has in place to ensure good quality prosecution by the Bar in rape trials. [207499]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service instructs experienced and committed advocates to prosecute cases involving allegations of rape. This includes instructing advocates of the necessary skill, competence and sensitivity to prosecute rape cases. In London and the South East advocates are instructed from a specialist list. In other parts of the country, Grade 4 advocates are instructed where possible. CPS Areas have been advised in guidance issued in August 2003 that local monitoring is appropriate. Examples of local monitoring carried out by CPS Areas include the monitoring of the performance of counsel at trial by experienced caseworkers; monitoring by rape specialists for part of the trial and the raising of performance issues with local Heads of Chambers and at Joint Advocates Selection Committee as appropriate.

In 2002, HMCPSI produced a report on the investigation and prosecution of Rape Offences. It made a number of recommendations, which have been followed up in a joint agency rape action plan. HMCPSI keeps the handling of rape cases under review in its inspection of Areas.

HMCPSI does not specifically look at the handling by the Bar of rape cases but it regards rape cases as sensitive and looks at how such cases are prosecuted in each Area.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what training the Crown Prosecution Service *(a)* organises for and *(b)* delivers to the Bar to ensure that its new code of practice on rape prosecutions is followed at trial. [207501]

The Solicitor-General: The "CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape" explains the way in which the CPS deals with cases in which an allegation of rape has been made.

The training the CPS delivers to the Bar on the "CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape" is determined at a local level. Not all CPS Areas have a local Bar. Seven CPS Areas have offered, organised and trained or provided training materials to their local Bar covering the Sexual Offences Act 2003 of which two Areas gave specific training on the "CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape". Other Areas have distributed the "CPS Policy for Prosecuting Cases of Rape" highlighting the issues raised in the document.

In addition, this document is on the CPS website and available to all barristers.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what training is given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the Bar about resisting applications for the admission of previous sexual history in rape trials. [207502]

The Solicitor-General: There is a small number of CPS Areas who have provided training to their local Bar on the Sexual Offences Act 2003 which incorporated training on section 41 applications, although generally there is no specific training conducted by the CPS for the Bar on resisting defence applications for the admission of previous sexual history.

The CPS Instructions for Prosecuting Advocates booklet, available on the CPS website, provide that it is essential that advocates are robust in dealing with applications by the defence to cross-examine about previous sexual history and that the correct procedure is followed to ensure that inappropriate questioning does not take place.

The CPS instructs experienced counsel in rape cases ensuring that scrutiny of defence applications to admit evidence of previous sexual history takes place and inappropriate applications are countered robustly.

The CPS and the Bar are in discussions on how counsel might best be able to demonstrate the necessary competencies to prosecute rape cases. An option is for them to have attended and appropriate training course.

Vera Baird: To ask the Solicitor-General what instructions are given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the Bar in rape trials about meeting and speaking to the complainant. [207504]

The Solicitor-General: The instructions given by the Crown Prosecution Service to the Bar about meeting and speaking to complainants in all trials are provided in the Crown Prosecution Service's Instructions to Advocates booklet.

The booklet contains the following instructions:

> "The advocate is reminded that the Code of Conduct permits barristers appearing at court to introduce themselves to witnesses and to explain court procedures. The CPS regards this personal contact as particularly important so far as victims of crime are concerned. The advocate's attention is also drawn to the duty imposed by the Code of Conduct to ensure that those facing unfamiliar court procedures are put at ease. This is particularly important in the case of nervous or vulnerable witnesses."

Instructions to Prosecuting Advocates also remind the Bar that in some cases, the advocate may be expected to attend an early special measures meeting, at which the police and the CPS will discuss special measures in the case. All rape victims are considered prima facie eligible for special measures unless they decline them.

The instructions to Prosecuting Advocates booklet is available on the internet.

Further work is ongoing between the CPS and the Bar to reinforce CPS expectations that prosecuting counsel will communicate appropriately with victims, particularly rape victims, at court.

CPS Prosecutions (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases under section 18 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861, as amended, were referred to Essex Crown Prosecution Service in each year from 2000; and in how many of these cases prosecutions were brought. [211056]

The Solicitor-General: Records are not available for the whole period requested and it is not possible to break the figures down into number of cases referred and number prosecuted. For the period February 2004 to December 2004, CPS Essex handled prosecutions in respect of 130 offences under s18 Offences Against the Person Act 1861.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to her answer of 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 930W, on Crown Prosecution Service prosecutions, what the nature of the offences committed by the defendants being prosecuted by Essex Crown Prosecution Service were; how many defendants were *(a)* convicted and *(b)* acquitted; and what the average cost of the prosecution in such cases was in each year since 2000. [211068]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service only introduced a system for the recording and analysis of principal offence types in September 2004. A table of the principal offence types and outcomes for the period since September 2004 is as follows.

Average prosecution costs are calculated nationally and so average prosecution costs for Essex are not available. The average cost for a defendant prosecuted for a summary offence in the magistrates court, is £390.80. To prosecute a defendant for an either way offence in the magistrates court, the average cost is £393.

The average cost for a defendant prosecuted in the Crown court following a mixture of guilty and not guilty pleas, is £1,256. For a defendant who pleads not guilty to all charges the average cost of a prosecution is £1,293. A table showing the breakdown of costs by case disposal is as follows.

Principal offence types for defendants prosecuted by CPS Essex 2004

		Discontinued (including Judge Ordered Acquittals)	*Discharged Committals*	*Judge Directed Acquittals and Dismissals no Case to Answer*	*Acquittals and Dismissals after Trial*	*Total Acquittals*	*Proofs in Absence*
A	Homicide	0	0	0	0	0	0
B	Offences Against The Person	211	4	5	48	53	2
C	Sexual Offences	13	1	0	7	7	0
D	Burglary	28	0	2	3	5	0
E	Robbery	6	1	1	1	2	0
F	Theft and Handling	63	4	1	12	13	0
G	Fraud and Forgery	11	3	0	2	2	0
H	Criminal Damage	39	0	1	10	11	0
I	Drugs Offences	6	2	1	1	2	0
J	Public Order Offences	56	0	1	13	14	4
K	All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	36	1	0	5	5	2
L	Motoring Offences	99	0	5	27	32	990
	Total	568	16	17	129	146	998

		Guilty Pleas	*Convictions after Trial*	*Total Unsuccessful Outcomes (excluding Administrative Finalisations)*	*Percentage*	*Total Convictions*	*Percentage*	*Total*
A	Homicide	2	0	0	0.0	2	100.0	2
B	Offences Against The Person	433	70	268	34.7	505	65.3	773

		Guilty Pleas	Convictions after Trial	Total Unsuccessful Outcomes (excluding Administrative Finalisations)	Percentage	Total Convictions	Percentage	Total
C	Sexual Offences	26	11	21	36.2	37	63.8	58
D	Burglary	122	10	33	20.0	132	80.0	165
E	Robbery	21	4	9	26.5	25	73.5	34
F	Theft And Handling	648	25	80	10.6	673	89.4	753
G	Fraud And Forgery	47	1	16	25.0	48	75.0	64
H	Criminal Damage	206	9	50	18.9	215	81.1	265
I	Drugs Offences	161	12	10	5.5	173	94.5	183
J	Public Order Offences	273	17	70	19.2	294	80.8	364
K	All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	245	29	42	13.2	276	86.8	318
L	Motoring Offences	1,524	121	131	4.7	2,635	95.3	2,766
	Total	3,708	309	730	12.7	5,015	87.3	5,745

Crown Prosecution Service records include an analysis of the principal offence type for which each defendant was prosecuted and, within that analysis, an indication of the outcome of proceedings. The information from these records is as follows in respect of CPS Essex, including the number of acquittals.

It should be noted that this information is incomplete in two respects:

The record was only introduced in September 2004; and

The analysis of outcomes takes no account of cases which resulted in an administrative finalisation (where the defendant could not be traced by the police, or had died, or been found unfit to plead). The number and proportion of unsuccessful outcomes are therefore understated.

Costs per defendant finalised—National

£

Finalisation category	Lawyer	DCW	Admin	Total
Magistrates court				
Guilty Summary	22.91	6.98	12.35	42.24
Guilty Either way	67.42	5.77	18.92	92.11
Discharged Committal	152.42	4.42	48.39	205.23
Prosecution dropped	101.16	4.56	26.13	131.85
Write off	54.94	6.99	14.81	76.74
Other Proceedings	22.72	7.85	8.32	38.89
Trial—Summary	319.87	3.52	67.40	390.79
Trial—Either way	324.63	2.53	65.82	392.98
Pre Charge Decision	29.07	0.00	0.06	29.13
Youth case (additional to PI above)	24.67	0	9.73	34.40
"Late Guilty" (additional to PI above)	96.78	0	40.03	136.81
Crown court				
Timeous Guilty	482.45	173.47	86.42	742.34
Late Guilty	544.49	211.74	102.83	859.06
Not guilty Contest	620.65	547.65	124.75	1,293.05
Guilty/Not Guilty Contest	598.26	534.01	122.71	1,254.98
Prosecution dropped	543.82	180.26	96.20	820.28
Write off	458.68	148.39	78.47	685.54
Appeals	69.08	61.11	32.78	162.97
Committal for sentence	36.50	55.89	35.36	127.75

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 345–46W, on Crown Prosecution Service prosecutions (Essex), what the cost to public funds was of prosecutions *(a)* in each year since 1997 and *(b)* for the period to September 2004; and if she will make a statement. [213869]

The Solicitor-General: The costs of prosecutions to public funds are divided into two categories. The first is the prosecution cost and the second is administration costs. The Crown Prosecution Service uses financial years for managing budgets and costs.

The table shows prosecution and administrative costs incurred by CPS Essex during each financial year since April 1997. Administration costs include all payroll costs and other non-payroll administration costs.

CPS Essex—Prosecution costs (1997 to September 2004)

£

Financial year	Prosecution	Administrative
1997–98	1,778,157	2,954,806
1998–99	2,205,035	3,108,413
1999–2000	2,391,631	3,379,999
2000–01	2,470,118	3,562,268
2001–02	1,751,749	4,314,751
2002–03	2,377,503	5,071,496
2003–04	2,943,440	5,610,187
2004–2005 (to September 2004)	1,685,430	3,093,535

European Court of Justice

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to her answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 663W, on the Court of Justice, if she will make a statement on UK interest in the case; and in how many instances since 1997 the UK has acted as an intervening state. [211459]

The Solicitor-General: The UK supported the Commission in this case as it raised important questions about the operation of the single market. However, after considering the Pleadings the UK felt that that it could add nothing of value to the Commission's case.

The information on the number of instances in which the UK acted as intervening state since 1997 is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, the UK participated in 165 cases brought in the European Court between February 2003 and December 2004.

Football Banning Orders

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many football banning order cases the Crown Prosecution Service has brought in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* England and Wales in each year since 1997; and how many of these resulted in (i) conviction and (ii) acquittal. [210454]

The Solicitor-General: The following table sets out the relevant figures. The figures relate to persons for whom these sentences were for the principal offences for which they were found guilty. When a defendant has been found guilty of two or more offences it is the offence for which the heaviest penalty is imposed. Where the same disposal is imposed for two or more offences, the offence selected is the offence for which the statutory maximum penalty is the most severe.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates court and convicted at all courts for offences related to football banning orders. England and Wales and Essex police force area, 1997 to 2003

			Essex			*England and Wales*		
Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Year*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*	*Proceeded against*	*Found guilty*	*Acquitted*
12530 breach of a domestic football banning order	Public Order Act 1986 S.32(3)	1997	—	—	—	5	5	
		1998	—	—	—	20	20	—
		1999	—	—	—	17	15	—
		[1]2000	—	—	—	15	12	—
		2001	—	—	—	9	7	—
		2002	—	—	—	4	2	—
		2003	—	—	—	7	4	—
12559 Failure to comply with requirements of Football Banning Order	Football Spectators Act 1 989 S.14J	1997	—	—				
		1998	—	—	—	—	—	—
		1999	—	—	—	—	—	—
		[1]2000		—	—	2	2	—
		2001		—	—	8	8	—
		2002	1	1	—	23	21	
		2003		—	—	57	49	
50200 Other offences related to Football Banning Orders	Football Spectators Act SS.14B, 21B and 22	1997	—	—	—			
		1998	—	—	—	—	—	
		1999	—	—	—	—	—	
		[1]2000	—	—	—	—	—	
		2001	—	—	—	—	—	
		2001						
		2002						
Failing to comply with the duty to report imposed by a restriction order	Football Banning Order Act S.14(4)	1997	—	—	—			
		1998	—	—	—	—	—	—
		1999	—	—	—	—	—	—
		[1]2000	—	—	—	—	—	—
		2001	—	—	—	—	—	—
		2002	—	—	—	—	—	—
		2003	—	—	—	—	—	—
Failing to comply with requirements necessary to give effect to restriction orders	Football Spectators Act 1989 S.19(6)	1997	—	—		2	2	—
		1998	—	—	—	3	2	—
		1999	—	—	—	1	1	—
		[1]2000	—	—	—	3	3	—
		2001	—	—	—	3	2	—
		2002	—	—	—	9	8	—
		2003	—	—	—	34	29	—

[1] Staffordshire police force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates courts for the year 2000. Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

Note:

These Data are on a principle offence basis.

Source:

RDS — Office for Criminal Justice Reform IOS: 039-04

TRANSPORT

A3 (Hindhead)

Virginia Bottomley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 669–70W, on the A3, for what reasons Ministers did not inform the right hon. Member for South West Surrey and the right hon. Member for North-East Hampshire (Mr. Arbuthnot) *(a)* about the redesignation of the A3 at Hindhead and *(b)* that the timetable for the A3 Hindhead Tunnel has been delayed. [213953]

Mr. Jamieson: Given the number of schemes covered by the Highways Agency's press announcement issued on 1 December 2004, it was not possible to notify MPs individually about the specific implications for schemes affecting their constituencies.

Car Hire Services (Disabled People)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* car hire and *(b)* car breakdown services that are not accessible to disabled people; what proportion this amounts to of the total number of these services in operation in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [214190]

Charlotte Atkins: The number of car hire firms in the UK is estimated to be over 500 companies and the numbers of firms that provide breakdown recovery services is estimated to be between 1200 and 1500.

There is currently no legal requirement for these companies to offer a service to disabled people. Some of the car hire companies, especially the larger ones, do offer a basic service to disabled people such as offering portable hand controls and many of the vehicle recovery operators also provide a service for disabled people, but it is not possible to estimate the numbers.

The Government are currently consulting on proposals to bring car hire companies and vehicle breakdown recovery operators within the scope of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act to extend the rights of disabled people to access these services.

Car Servicing (Fatal Accidents)

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce procedures to record the number of fatal car accidents that occur as a result of poor servicing of cars. [214141]

Mr. Jamieson: From 1 January 2005, the national system for the collection of data on accidents involving personal injury has included questions on contributory factors to accidents.

This will provide information on whether vehicle defects contributed to an accident, although it will not distinguish whether the defect was a result of poor servicing.

Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Scheme

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency offices in Swansea do not accept licences issued in Northern Ireland in respect of the Conditional Offer Fixed Penalty Scheme. [211287]

Mr. Jamieson: Driver licensing is a devolved matter in NI. While a driving licence issued by either GB or NI authorities is legally recognised by the other, there is at the present time no mutual recognition of endorsable fixed penalties between them.

However, the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003 inserted a new section in the Road Traffic Offenders Act allowing a Northern Ireland driving licence holder to be issued with a Great Britain counterpart. This came into effect on 11 October.

Since that date there has been a facility for NI licence holders to obtain a GB counterpart. This allows access to the fixed penalty system in GB.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213269]

Charlotte Atkins: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend, the Chief Secretary on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

DVLA Fines

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of entries on the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency system where details of an individual's address are not accurate. [208283]

Mr. Jamieson: A survey conducted by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in 2003 established that 75.2 per cent. of the address details held on its driving licence database were correct in every detail. The corresponding figure for its vehicle database was 85.6 per cent. The main cause of error was motorists' failure to notify DVLA that they had changed address and 18 per cent. of driving licence holders and 7 per cent. of vehicle keepers had failed to do so. This means that DVLA's records were sufficiently up-to-date to allow law enforcement agencies to trace vehicle keepers in over 92 per cent. of cases.

Since then, DVLA has mounted a publicity campaign to encourage motorists to update their details. A further survey, to be conducted this year, will measure the effectiveness of that campaign. Major changes have also been introduced to the way that payment of vehicle excise duty is enforced. These are encouraging motorists to notify DVLA promptly when vehicles change hands.

Integrated Transport Strategy (York)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the *(a)* car parking charges imposed by the York council for parking in York at night and *(b)* closure of the Park and Ride schemes in York at 8 p.m. at night; and what assessment he has made of the impact of these policies on achieving an integrated transport strategy in York. [214031]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has received no such representations and consequently we have made no assessment of the impact of these policies on achieving an integrated transport strategy in York. These are local issues, to be determined by City of York council as local highway authority.

Rail Usage

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the target set in the 10-Year Plan 2000 to increase rail use by 50 per cent. by 2010 is still in force. [212113]

Mr. Darling: As I have made clear on a number of occasions this target was unrealistic. Last year Britain's railway carried over 1 billion passengers and people are travelling further by rail than in any year since 1946.

New Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets come into effect in April 2005. The current growth target for rail will be replaced by a target to "improve punctuality and reliability of rail services to at least 85 per cent. by 2006, with further improvements by 2008". This target better reflects the Government's and passengers' immediate priority of improving performance. Obviously as performance improves more people will want to travel by train and the Government's rail policy is to encourage them to do so.

Road Accidents

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many reported road accidents involved drivers who had passed their test within one year of the incident in each of the last five years. [211883]

Mr. Jamieson: The information requested is not available. However, we know from research we have undertaken that one in five new drivers has some sort of accident within one year of passing their driving test. A cohort study of new drivers currently under way will refresh this information.

Roadside Advertising

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of a possible link between prominent roadside advertising and road accidents. [213470]

Mr. Jamieson: Although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that advertising alongside motorways can have a detrimental effect on road safety, the results of studies carried out to date have been inconclusive.

Transport Authorities (Thames Gateway)

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many local transport authorities in the Thames Gateway outside Greater London have reported on the six core accessibility indicators as part of their local transport plan. [214654]

Charlotte Atkins: Guidance issued to local transport authorities in December 2004 on the next round of local transport plans (LTPs) includes the requirement that authorities set at least one target relating to accessibility, based on one of the six core indicators, a local accessibility indicator or both. This is a new requirement following the recent development of accessibility planning guidance.

Provisional LTPs including this requirement are not due to be submitted until July 2005, with the final LTPS to be completed by March 2006.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Apprenticeships

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council were begun in each region during the six months ending 31 December 2004. [214523]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom the Council's Chief Executive will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by her Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [200830]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This information could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Education Funding

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she next plans to review the education funding formula for schools in England. [213858]

Derek Twigg: The five year strategy signalled the Government's intention to introduce a dedicated Schools Budget, guaranteed by national Government and delivered through local authorities. We will be launching a full public consultation on the detailed proposals shortly.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what capital allocations have been made to Leicestershire county council for education purposes in each year since 1996–97. [213754]

Derek Twigg: The table shows the capital allocations made to Leicestershire county council and its schools for education purposes in each year since 1996–97.

Leicestershire local education authority

	£000
1996–97	3,565
1997–98	2,920
1998–99	6,503
1999–2000	9,232
2000–01	20,957
2001–02	15,831
2002–03	25,401
2003–04	27,582
2004–05	33,834

Education Spending (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the amount spent per pupil was in North Durham in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214196]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is contained within the following table:

Combined LEA and school based expenditure[1,2] per pupil[3]—cash terms

	£
1997–98[4]	2,550
2001–02	3,270
2003–04	3,910

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).

[2] 1997–98 financial data are taken from Revenue Outturn spending returns submitted to the ODPM 2001–02 and 2003–04 financial data are taken from Section 52 Outturn Statements submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. 2003–04 data remains provisional and is subject to change by the LEA.

[3] Pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including those under 5s funded by the LEA and being educated in private settings, pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and other LEA maintained pupils. The pupil data for pupils attending maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools are taken from the DfES Annual Schools Census. Private voluntary and independent (FVI) under 5 pupil numbers are taken from the Early Years census but are only included from 1999–2000 onwards. Other LEA maintained pupils includes all pupils attending schools not maintained by the Authority for whom the Authority is paying full tuition fees, or educated otherwise than in schools and pupil referral units under arrangements made by the Authority drawn from the Form 8b submitted to the DfES. Also included as other LEA maintained pupils are all pupils attending pupil referral units who are not registered at a maintained mainstream school drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[4] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1996–99.

Notes:

1. Financial data are collected at local authority level and not constituency level and as such the figures provided are for Durham LEA.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10 as reported the Durham LEA at 3 February 2005.

League Tables

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the oral answer of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 948, on league tables, what assessment her Department has made of the improvement in average results at GCSE that would be achieved if all local education authority areas were to perform at the same level as selective local education authority areas. [210953]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 25 January 2005]*: If all local education authority areas returned the same value added as selective local education authority areas, the average results would improve by nine points at GCSE, where a grade C, for example, is equal to 40 points and a grade B equal to 46 points.

However, this calculation does not take account of the different characteristics of pupils educated in different LEAs, so it does not give an estimate of the possible impact of making all LEAs selective.

New Deal for Schools

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many bids Surrey local education authority has made for funding under the New Deal for Schools; what the total monetary value of these bids is; how many grants the authority received under the New Deal for Schools; and what the total monetary value of these grants is. [214184]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Surrey local education authority presented a total of 99 bids for New Deal for Schools between 1997 and 2002. The total monetary value for these bids amounts to £29,905,000. The number of approved projects was 69, with a total value of £17,575,000.

Ofsted

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what spending is planned on Ofsted for each year from 2003–04 to 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [213957]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: That is a matter for Ofsted. HM Inspector, David Bell will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of his letter in the Library.

School Extensions and Repairs (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the capital spend on school extension repairs and classroom upgrades was in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley in each year since 1997. [214399]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The table shows the capital resources allocated to Lancashire local education authority and its schools, since 1997. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken locally in accordance with the locally prepared asset management plans. Information on how resources are split between constituencies and capital spend on school extension repairs and classroom upgrades are not held centrally.

	Lancashire LEA (£000)
1997–98	13,288
1998–99	19,457
1999–2000	23,407
2000–01	42,200
2001–02	36,021
2002–03	55,453
2003–04	62,607
2004–05	44,234

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which schools in Chorley have benefited from new classrooms, school extensions and upgrades since 1997. [214400]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table show the capital resources allocated to Lancashire local education authority and its schools, since 1997. We do not hold central information on which schools benefited from new classrooms, school extensions and upgrades. The decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken and held locally.

	Lancashire LEA (£000)
1997–98	13,288
1998–99	19,457
1999–2000	23,407
2000–01	42,200
2001–02	36,021
2002–03	55,453
2003–04	62,607
2004–05	44,234

School Meals

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when Ofsted will take school meals into account during inspections as set out in the White Paper, "Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier". [213297]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of the letter in the House Library.

Science Colleges

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entries there were at A-level in *(a)* physics, *(b)* chemistry, *(c)* biology and *(d)* mathematics from schools designated as specialist science colleges in each of the last eight years, including entries from such schools before their designation as specialist schools. [213300]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested on GCE A-level entries for 16 to 18-year-olds in specialist science colleges between 1997 and 2004 is given as follows:

	Physics	*Chemistry*	*Biology*	*Mathematics*
2004	2,262	1,701	3,010	3,222
2003	2,225	1,821	3,022	3,067
2002	2,306	1,914	2,995	2,953
2001	2,325	1,846	2,932	3,581
2000	2,284	1,855	2,942	3,650
1999	2,313	1,980	3,021	3,668
1998	2,198	1,814	2,830	3,519
1997	2,166	1,811	2,749	3,545

The 153 specialist science colleges included are those operational on 1 September 2004 that were published in the 2004 School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables.

Sprinklers

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on installation of sprinklers in schools; what advice she has given to schools on installation of sprinklers; and if she will make a statement. [213328]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Since April 2001, all new construction work at schools has been subject to the Building Regulations. Projects will not be approved unless they are designed in accordance with the 2000 edition of Approved Document B (Fire Safety), which accompanies the regulations. The Building Regulations do not require the installation of fire sprinkler systems in new school accommodation but that does not mean that local education authorities are prohibited from specifying their use.

My Department's cost guidelines do not include for the cost of installation of sprinklers as standard. Where risk assessment shows that sprinklers are desirable, their costs can be included as an abnormal.

The Department's guide "Fire Safety" includes information on fire sprinklers. It states that, though expensive to install, their use may be worthwhile in schools where the risk of arson is high. In these circumstances sprinkler systems can help minimise the loss of valuable course work and teaching materials through fire, and prevent major disruption to the life of a school.

Teachers (Abuse Allegations)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons teachers accused of assaulting pupils are not granted anonymity. [213552]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: It is not appropriate to provide anonymity for people accused of crime for a number of reasons. The principle that criminal trials should take place in open court and be freely reported is one of the key foundations of our criminal justice system. The fact that the system is open and transparent, and that the media is able to report freely what has taken place publicly in court, helps ensure public confidence in the system and helps encourage victims and witnesses to come forward. Also anonymity would raise important principles of the freedom of the press and the public interest. Publicity can work to an accused person's advantage: by helping him or her gather support and bringing to light evidence in his or her behalf. Equally there have been examples of responsible investigative journalism bringing to light cases of serious abuse that might otherwise have gone undetected.

However, someone who is under investigation by the police but who has not been charged with a criminal offence should not be identified in the press. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) has issued revised guidance to all police forces, applying to all offences, which makes it clear that anyone under investigation, but not charged, should not be named, or details provided to the press which might lead to their identification before they are charged.

Teachers' Pensions

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding was provided for schools to support teachers' pensions in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05 in (i) school sixth forms and (ii) further education colleges. [211578]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department does not separately allocate funds for school sixth forms or further education (FE) colleges to meet the costs of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS). We expect schools and colleges to meet staffing costs from funds they receive from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and other sources. The LSC funding includes provision for changes to the TPS in 2003.

Truancy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many unauthorised absences from secondary schools there were in each *(a)* local education authority and *(b)* Government Office Region in each year since 1996–97. [211978]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is placed in the Libraries.

Vocational Learning

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with employers' organisations on the requirements for structured work placements arising from the Tomlinson Report's recommendations on vocational learning; and if she will make a statement. [211239]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We are currently preparing a White Paper on the 14–19 phase, including our response to the recommendations of the final report of the Working Group on 14–19 Reform chaired by Mike Tomlinson. Our White Paper will include an assessment of the impact of our recommendations on the requirements for structured work placements, which we will discuss with employers' organisations.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211330]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Department's Welsh Language Scheme has been prepared in accordance with section 21(3) of the Welsh Language Act 1993. The Scheme received the endorsement of the Welsh Language Board on 28 March 2000 and was implemented from 3 April 2000.

TREASURY

African Aid

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy for funding aid for Africa. [214111]

Mr. Timms: The UK policy for funding aid to Africa is to collaborate effectively with other donors to funding Government-owned poverty reduction plans. UK aid to Africa will rise to £1.25 billion a year by 2008, from around £864 million today. However, in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals, Africa faces a large funding gap. The UK proposes to fill this gap by working with G7 and EU countries to agree 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief and the launch of the International Finance Facility.

Correspondence

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to resolve the issue raised in the letter to the Inland Revenue on 19 June 2004 from the hon. Member for Bassetlaw regarding overpayments and his constituent Tracey Moore. [213748]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue wrote to the hon. Member in July 2004 in response to his letter of 19 June. They wrote to him again on 21 December 2004 in response to his further letter of 30 November. The Revenue will also be writing to his constituent shortly.

ATM Charges

John Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the LINK network, *(b)* high street banks and *(c)* cash machine operators on charges for use of cash machines. [213219]

Mr. Timms: Officials meet with representatives from LINK, Banks and independent operators on a regular basis to discuss this and other issues.

Breast Cancer

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what percentage of breast cancer patients live for at least five years following treatment in the United Kingdom; and what the average survival rate is in the European Union. [214360]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 7 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning what percentage of breast cancer patients live for at least five years following treatment in the United Kingdom; and what the average survival rate is in the European Union. (214360)

Survival figures for the UK as a whole are not currently available. The latest available survival rates for breast cancer in England and Wales are for adult patients (aged 15–99 years) diagnosed during 1996–99 and followed up to 31 December 2001. The five-year age-standardised1 relative survival rate for female patients diagnosed with breast cancer during 1996–99[2] in England and Wales was 77.5% (125,093 patients included in analysis[3]). These statistics are available on the National Statistics website at

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk = 7899

The latest survival rates for breast cancer in Scotland are available on the Scottish Cancer Registry, Information and Statistics Division Scotland website:

http://www.isdscotland.org/isd/info3.jsp?pContentID = 1420i&p_applic = CCC&p_service = Content.show&

Figures for Northern Ireland are available on the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry website at:

http://www.qub.ac.uk/nicr/statspages/newtables/SurvivalStats/Breast-Surv.html

Comparable information on breast cancer survival in countries within the European Union is provided by the EUROCARE study. This covers parts of the UK and Europe.

The most recently published results from this study provide information on survival up to five years after diagnosis for patients diagnosed with breast cancer during 1990–94 and followed up to the end of 1999. These results were published in:

> Berrino, F, Capocaccia, R, Coleman MP, et al. (editors) (2003). Survival of Cancer Patients in Europe: the EUROCARE-3 Study. Annals of Oncology. Volume 14, Supplement 5.

This volume is available online at

http://www.annonc.oupjournals.org/content/vol14/suppl_5/index.dtl

[1] As cancer survival varies with age at diagnosis, rates have been age standardised (directly age standardised to the 1986–90 cancer patients population) to control for changes in the age profile of cancer patients over time.

[2] Complete five-year follow-up is currently only available for those diagnosed in 1996. For patients diagnosed in later years the most up-to-date estimates of shorter-term survival were used in this analysis of survival rates.

[3] Eligible patients included in the survival analysis. The criteria for excluding patient records are given in Health Statistics Quarterly 2000; 6: 71–80, for example where the registration was of a second (different) primary cancer:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_health/HSQ6Book.pdf

Corporation Tax

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses in Lancashire have benefited from corporation tax reduction since 1997. [213951]

Dawn Primarolo: Nationally nearly 600,000 companies have a corporation tax liability each year. All will benefit from the cuts in the main, small and starting companies' rates of corporation tax that have been introduced in recent years. However, it is not possible to identify precisely those businesses that trade in specific areas such as Lancashire.

Debt/Incomes

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average *(a)* unsecured debt per person, *(b)* secured debt per person and *(c)* annual income per person has been in each year since 1997. [214789]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Dr. Vincent Cable, dated 7 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question on secured and unsecured debt per person and annual income per person. I am replying in his absence. (214789)

The information requested is shown in the table below. The data for secured debt, unsecured debt (households' total financial liabilities other than secured debt) and income (households' gross disposable income) used in the calculations are national accounts series for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined: separate estimates are not available.

For the denominator in the calculations the series used is Population aged 16+.

£

	Annual income per person	*Secured debt per person*	*Unsecured debt per person*
1997	12,420	9,430	3,540
1998	12,730	9,960	3,790
1999	13,310	10,720	4,090
2000	14,200	11,570	4,460
2001	15,120	12,670	4,910
2002	15,470	14,290	5,620
2003	16,050	16,400	6,100

Internet Gambling

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans are being developed by Customs and Excise to levy a tax on internet gambling. [214447]

John Healey: Betting via the internet already falls within the scope of general betting duty and is taxed at 15 per cent. of gross profits. Existing social legislation makes no provision for licensing internet-based gaming so all such gaming is currently provided from outside the UK and is beyond the scope of UK tax.

The Gambling Bill will introduce new licensing arrangements for all forms of gambling via the internet and other 'remote' media (such as mobile telephones and interactive digital TV). HM Treasury, together with HM Customs and Excise, will consider the tax implications of this as part of a wider examination of gambling taxation in the light of the Gambling Bill changes.

Life Expectancy (North-East)

Iain Wright: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the life expectancy is of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in (i) Hartlepool, (ii) Tees Valley, (iii) the North East Region and (iv) the UK. [213503]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Iain Wright, dated 7 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the life expectancy is of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in (i) Hartlepool, (ii) Tees Valley, (iii) the North East Region and (iv) the UK. (213503)

Figures for life expectancy at birth for the UK and its constituent countries are published annually by the Government Actuary's Department. Figures for life expectancy at birth for English regions and local authorities are published annually by the Office for National Statistics. Both sets of figures are based on three-year rolling averages and are calculated separately for males and females. The most recent available figures, for 2001–2003, are given in the table below.

Life expectancy at birth (years) for the United Kingdom, the North-East Government Office Region, the Tees Valley Local Learning and Skills Council, and Hartlepool local authority, 2001–03

	Male	*Female*
United Kingdom[1]	75.9	80.5
North East[2]	74.7	79.5
Tees Valley[2]	74.6	79.2
Hartlepool[2]	73.4	78.4

Sources:

[1] Government Actuary's Department

[2] ONS

M&S v. Inland Revenue

Mr. Sayeed: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the likely reimbursement of tax revenues necessary if actions of a similar class to the Marks and Spencer case against the Inland Revenue at the European Court of Justice are successful. [213969]

Dawn Primarolo: It is impossible to assess how many other potential litigants are in the same circumstances as Marks and Spencer. Consequently, it is not possible to quantify the amount of tax potentially reimbursable.

North Durham

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have benefited from child tax credit in North Durham since its inception. [214684]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/

stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Population Figures

Mr. Flook: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the population was in each of the last eight years in *(a)* South Gloucestershire, *(b)* City of Bristol, *(c)* North Somerset, *(d)* Bath and North East Somerset, *(e)* Taunton Deane, *(f)* Mendip, *(g)* West Somerset, *(h)* South Somerset and *(i)* Sedgemoor. [214650]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Adrian Flook, dated 7 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the population of South Gloucestershire, City of Bristol, North Somerset, Bath and North East Somerset, Taunton Deane, Mendip, West Somerset, South Somerset and Sedgemoor for the last eight years. I am replying in his absence. (214650)

The table below shows the mid-year population estimates for 1996–2003 for each of these areas.

Mid-year population estimates: 1996 to 2003

(Thousand)

Area	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
South Gloucestershire	233.0	236.3	238.4	241.6	244.8	246.0	246.4	246.8
City of Bristol	389.2	389.2	389.4	391.0	390.4	390.0	389.7	391.5
North Somerset	183.2	183.8	185.9	186.7	187.7	188.8	189.7	191.4
Bath and North East Somerset	163.6	164.7	166.0	167.1	168.5	169.2	169.5	170.9
Taunton Deane	98.1	98.6	98.9	99.6	100.2	102.6	103.9	105.0
Mendip	99.1	100.4	100.3	101.9	103.1	104.0	104.8	105.6
West Somerset	33.7	33.4	33.9	34.5	34.8	35.1	35.3	35.5
South Somerset	147.6	148.5	149.4	150.2	150.7	151.1	151.8	153.3
Sedgemoor	101.3	102.8	103.7	104.2	105.2	106.0	107.1	108.1

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Redundancies (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many redundancies have taken place in the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [213387]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 7 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about redundancies in the Greater London area. (213387)

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) provides estimates of numbers of people made redundant according to their area of usual residence. People are asked in the survey if they were made redundant in the three months before their LFS interviews.

The attached table gives the information requested for people resident in the Greater London area.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey (LFS) are, as with those from any statistical sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

People resident in Greater London who were made redundant

Not seasonally adjusted

Three months ending November	*Levels*	*Rate per 1,000 employees*[1]
2002	17,000	5.6
2003	16,000	5.7
2004	17,000	5.8

[1] Denominator for rate is the number of employees in the previous quarter.

Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Small Firms

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what changes his Department has made since 2001 to the way in which small firms are required to calculate the tax due on profits. [214183]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government want a simple and fair tax system for all small firms. To this end, they have made amendments to the rules relating to income tax and corporation tax in each Finance Act since 2001. These have not changed the basic calculation of profits for the purpose, which is income less deductions. These changes have however affected the ways in which many small firms are required or entitled to adjust their profits and take into account reliefs and allowances to calculate the tax due.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many compensatory payments have been made by the Inland Revenue for errors in tax credit payments in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement; [213891]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the number of compensation claims for tax credits errors by the Inland Revenue under the Code of Practice for Complaints in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04; how many claims have been authorised for compensation; and if he will make a statement. [213955]

Dawn Primarolo: The circumstances in which the Inland Revenue will make compensation payments to its customers are explained in the Department's Code of Practice 1 "Putting things right" which is available at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk. The Department will pay compensation for reasonable costs incurred as a direct result of their mistakes or delays and to recognise worry and distress caused by those mistakes and delays.

The Department will make a compensation payment if they believe it is justified even if the customer has not asked for compensation. For compensation payments in 2002–03 I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Hamilton, South (Mr. Tynan) on 23 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 1411W.

For the number of compensation payments in 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Northaven (Mr. Webb) and to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 20 July 2004, *Official Report*, columns 191–92W.

For the number of compensation payments made between 1 April and 31 December I refer the hon. Member to the reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field), on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 599W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the computer problems which have been experienced by the Inland Revenue Tax Credits department over the last 18 months. [213941]

Dawn Primarolo: The IT support for New Tax Credits is a major new system.

The system has been stable and performing very well in terms of availability and speed for well over a year.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the total *(a)* number and *(b)* monetary value of overpayments of (i) child tax credit and (ii) working credit in (A) 2002–03 and (B) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [213947]

Dawn Primarolo: For working tax credit and child tax credit, I refer my hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Members for Northavon (Mr. Webb) and for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 946–48W.

For working families and disabled person's tax credits I refer the hon. Member to my answer to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many incorrect payments of tax credits have been made by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement; [213948]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the percentage error rate on payment of tax credits in 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [213954]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Tom Levitt), on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 407W.

The Department expects the level of processing accuracy in the current year to be markedly better than last year, in line with its target to decide 90 per cent. of tax credit claims, changes and renewals accurately. It will publish its performance against the current year's target in its Annual Report in due course.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make it his policy not to reclaim overpaid tax credits where the Department is responsible for overpayment. [213952]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out their approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

A claimant will not be asked to pay back an overpayment where it was caused by a mistake by the Inland Revenue and it was reasonable for the claimant to think their award was right.

The Inland Revenue may also decide that a claimant should not be asked to pay back all or part of an overpayment, if this would cause hardship to the claimant and his/her family.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the number of *(a)* child and *(b)* working tax credit applications in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [213956]

Dawn Primarolo: For the numbers of families who have successfully claimed tax credits in 2003–04 and 2004–05, I refer my hon. Member to 'Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics'. These publications can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Numbers of families who have only made unsuccessful applications for tax credits are not available.

Tax Returns

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of persons filing tax returns late for 2003–04 were *(a)* pensioners and *(b)* self-employed. [213760]

Dawn Primarolo: Data in respect of 2003–04 returns (which were due back to the Inland Revenue by 31 January 2005) is not yet available.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what mitigating circumstances would prevent the application of financial penalties to people failing to file tax returns on time. [213761]

Dawn Primarolo: A person is deemed not to have failed to deliver his tax return on time if he had a reasonable excuse for being late and where the return is delivered without unreasonable delay once that excuse has ceased. There is, sensibly, no definitive or exhaustive list of the circumstances that can constitute a reasonable excuse as this is a matter that can be considered properly only on a case by case basis.

Unemployment

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the levels of long-term *(a)* adult and *(b)* youth unemployment were in North Southwark and Bermondsey in each of the last eight years. [214331]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 7 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (214331)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of long-term unemployed people, both youth and adult, who were resident in the North Southwark and Bermondsey Parliamentary Constituency, for each twelve month period ending February from 1999 to 2004, the most recent available period. Information on length of time unemployed is not available for earlier periods.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of young people aged 18 to 24 years old and adults (aged 25 and over) resident in the North Southwark and Bermondsey constituency claiming Jobseeker's Allowance benefits for over 12 months or more in each year from 1997 to 2004.

Table 1: Long-term[1] unemployment among people resident in North Southwark and Bermondsey parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February	*Youth (aged 16–24)*	*Adult (aged 25 and over)*
1999	1,000	1,000
2000	[2]—	2,000
2001	[2]—	2,000
2002	[2]—	1,000
2003	[2]—	1,000
2004	[2]—	2,000

[1] People unemployed for 12 months or more.

[2] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:

These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially should be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the North Southwark and Bermondsey constituency claiming for 12 months or more

Annual averages	*Youth claimants (aged 18–24)*[1]	*Adult claimants (aged 25 and over)*[1]
1997	310	1,980
1998	185	1,430
1999	85	1,445
2000	50	1,370
2001	30	1,065
2002	35	1,025
2003	45	1,115
2004	55	1,160

[1] Computerised claims only.

Source:

Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Working Tax Credit

Mr. Todd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will extend entitlement to the child care element of working tax credit to a couple where one person is engaged in qualifying remunerative work and the other is a student nurse. [213373]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have no such plans.

The child care element of working tax credit is designed to help remove the child care barrier that often prevents people taking up or returning to work. It is only available if the claimant is:

a lone parent working at least 16 hours a week

a member of a couple who both work at least 16 hours a week, or

a member of a couple in which one partner works 16 hours or more a week and the other partner is incapacitated/ in hospital or in prison.

Attendance on a course of study does not qualify as the work requirement for these purposes.

DEFENCE

Hercules Aircraft

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Hercules C130J and C130K aircraft have a full defensive aids suite. [214085]

Mr. Hoon: All of the Hercules C130K fleet and about half of the 25 Hercules C130J fleet are equipped with infra-red defensive countermeasures. Additionally, some of these aircraft have an enhanced defensive capability. Only Hercules with appropriate defensive countermeasures are deployed to operational theatres. Other Hercules are used on routine air transport tasks elsewhere.

Military Conduct (Detainees)

17. **Harry Cohen:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to end all hooding of detainees by members of the armed forces; and if he will make a statement. [214098]

Mr. Hoon: In line with long standing policy, the United Kingdom's Armed Forces do not use hooding during interrogation. Hooding has been used while detaining suspects in Iraq, both for security of our own Forces and of the detainees, it is not being used currently. The Ministry Of Defence is reviewing its policy for the restricting of a detainee's vision during arrest and transit.

Afghanistan

20. **Dr. Palmer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Afghanistan. [214101]

Mr. Ingram: Security in Afghanistan continues to improve in the wake of last year's Presidential elections, and in the run up to this year's parliamentary elections, which will represent the culmination of the Bonn Process. The UK, with international partners, will continue to support the International Security Assistance Force, including through the deployment of HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps to command ISAF in 2006.

Future Infantry Structure

22. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with serving and retired service men and women about the conduct of the future infantry structure exercise. [214103]

Mr. Hoon: I have had a number of discussions with the Chief of the General Staff and other members of the Army Board. In addition, in the course of visits to units both here and overseas I have discussed these issues with other serving members of the Army. I have also met and received representations from a number of retired Service personnel on behalf of various regiments and Regimental Associations.

Iraq

23. **Mr. Hendrick:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [214104]

Mr. Hoon: Over the election period, insurgents and extremists continued in their efforts to destabilise the progress that is being made towards a stable and democratic Iraq. Despite this, elections took place successfully as planned, with initial indications of a high turn out and less violence than many anticipated. This reflects the thoroughness of the security arrangements put in place by the Iraqi Security Forces, the efforts of the Multi National Force-Iraq in support, and the determination of the Iraqi people to exercise their democratic rights.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of possible damage caused to sites of archaeological and historical significance by the British Army in Iraq; [213543]

(2) what consultations he has had with *(a)* the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and *(b)* British archaeologists and scholars regarding the impact of the activities of the British Army in Iraq; [213542]

(3) what plans he has to aid the *(a)* restoration and *(b)* preservation of sites of archaeological and historical significance in Iraq; [213541]

(4) what provisions he has made to ensure the protection of sites of archaeological and historical interest in areas where the British Army are serving in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213540]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom takes very seriously the need to respect Iraq's cultural heritage. We are not aware of any assessments identifying damage done to sites of archaeological and historical significance by the British Army in Iraq. We have, however, taken a number of steps to minimise the risk. This includes being a signatory to the 1977 Additional Protocol (AP1) of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Under the terms of AP1, civilian objects are to be protected from attack unless that object is being used for military purposes, in which case it may lose its special protected status. An aide memoire is also issued to all UK service personnel deploying under Operation Telic, which reminds service personnel of their obligation under AP1. The leaflet contains a pictorial example of the protective emblem that can be used under the Hague Cultural Property Convention 1954, to which Iraq is a full signatory, to denote buildings used for religion, art, science, charity, historical monuments, or other important cultural sites. During the combat phase of Operation Telic, legal advisors briefed commanders deploying to theatre about the importance of protecting cultural property. Further guidance was, and continues to be available in the rules of engagement and the targeting directive.

In addition to operating under AP1, we are signatories to UNSCR 1546, which stresses that all parties need to respect and protect Iraq's archaeological, historical, cultural, and religious heritage. HMG also recently announced its intention to take forward the ratification of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict.

The Secretary of State for Defence has not had any direct consultations with the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities or British archaeologists and scholars regarding the impact of activities of the British Army in Iraq. We do, however, work in partnership with other Departments who take the lead on this issue. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department of Culture, Media and Sport, have regular discussions with the Iraqi Ministry of Culture on these issues. The UK has provided support to the British Museum to enable them to help the Iraqi Ministry assess the damage caused to archaeological sites in Iraq and to ensure their future protection.

Airborne Forces

Mr. Russell Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* soldiers and *(b)* officers in the Army are employed on full-time duties concerned with maintaining airborne forces in role. [200999]

Mr. Caplin: Within Joint Helicopter Command, which is responsible for delivering the Army's airborne capability, there are 118 officer and 2,536 soldier posts of REME and RLC combined.

Anthrax Vaccines (Gulf Wars)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on adverse reactions by service personnel and their families who received anthrax vaccines prior to each war in the Gulf. [213342]

Mr. Caplin: Potential adverse reactions to the anthrax vaccine are well known and may include a mild rash or swelling at the site of injection or at the site of an earlier injection and may last for a couple of days. More rarely, swollen glands, mild fever, flu-like symptoms, rash, itching or other allergic reactions may occur. No representations on adverse reactions, other than a small number for those issues described above, have been received.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel and their families involved in each war in the Gulf who received anthrax vaccine have reported *(a)* miscarriages, *(b)* infant mortalities and *(c)* other illnesses; and if he will make a statement. [213376]

Mr. Caplin: Responsibility for treating Service and ex-Service personnel and their families and reporting adverse reactions rests with Service Medical Officers and GPs. The Ministry of Defence has received no reports of miscarriages, infant mortalities or other illnesses from personnel who received the Anthrax vaccine, other than the expected minor side-effects. The Health Protection Agency has advised that there is no biologically plausible mechanism to explain how a baby could be harmed by an inactivated (non-live) vaccine such as Anthrax given pre-conception to either parent.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information he has received from the US Administration or its agencies relating to illnesses suffered by service people and their families as a result of anthrax vaccinations. [213378]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence's information from the United States on such matters has been drawn from published sources.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the constituent parts of the anthrax vaccine given to Defence personnel were in each war in the Gulf; and if he will make a statement. [213379]

Mr. Caplin: The anthrax vaccine given to United Kingdom defence personnel is the same as that used for civilians in the UK and its composition has not changed since the vaccine was licensed in 1979. The active ingredient is a sterile filtrate of an alum precipitated anthrax antigen in a solution for injection. The other ingredients are aluminium potassium sulphate, sodium chloride and purified water and the preservative is thiomersal at 0.005 per cent. The composition of the current UK licensed anthrax vaccine is available on the Health Protection Agency website.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what evidence has been *(a)* found by and *(b)* reported to his Department's medical services of clusters of persons suffering ill health who were associated with the anthrax vaccine given to service personnel in each of the wars in the Gulf. [213568]

Mr. Caplin: None.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will commission research into whether carbohydrate-deficient glycoprotein syndrome has been a result of reactions to the anthrax vaccine given to personnel in each war in the Gulf; and if he will make a statement. [213569]

Mr. Caplin: We are aware of no published clinical evidence to support an association between carbohydrate-deficient glycoprotein syndrome and the anthrax vaccine and are not commissioning any research.

Chartered Aircraft

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213707]

Mr. Ingram: In financial years 2002–03 and 2003–04, the Ministry of Defence spent some £59.811 million and £56.408 million respectively on chartering aircraft. These figures are provisional and subject to final audit. In the current financial year ending March 2005, it is estimated that the likely spend will be some £33.986 million. The files on aircraft charters in previous financial years are now archived and the costs of those charters are not held in a form which could be easily extracted and without disproportionate cost.

Defence Agencies' Staff

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the *(a)* Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency, *(b)* Defence Housing Executive and *(c)* Defence Intelligence and Security Centre; how many are employed in Scotland; and what the personnel costs of each agency (i) are in 2004–05 and (ii) were in 2003–04. [213920]

Mr. Caplin: As of 1 April 2004, the Defence Geographic and Imagery Intelligence Agency (DGIA) employed 1,450 staff, though none in Scotland. The Defence Housing Executive (DHE) merged with Defence Estates on 1 April 2004 and meaningful current staff figures cannot therefore be provided. However, on 1 April 2003 DHE employed 880 staff, all civilians, of which 90 were based in Scotland. As of 1 April 2004, the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC) employed 470 staff, though none in Scotland.

The personnel costs for DGIA and DISC in 2004–05 will be available in their respective 2004–05 annual reports and accounts, which will be published later this year.

The personnel costs for DGIA, DISC, and DHE in 2003–04 can be found in the Agencies' Annual Reports and Accounts, which are available in the Library of the House.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget the Defence Medical Education and Training Agency spent in Scotland in *(a)* monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2002–03; and if he will make a statement. [213921]

Mr. Caplin: The Defence Medical Education and Training Agency (DMETA) was established on 1 April 2003, so no figures are available for the 2002–03 financial year. In the financial year 2003–04 DMETA spent £80,000 on personnel in Scotland, which is 0.08 per cent. of the agency's total personnel budget.

Defence Contracts

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which companies hold the largest defence contract with his Department. [214084]

Mr. Ingram: The company with the largest defence contract, by value, placed by the Ministry of Defence is with QinetiQ and covers a Long Term Partnering Agreement for Test and Training Support Services.

Defence Employment (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the MoD Police; how many are employed in Scotland; what the figures were in each case in January 2004; what the personnel costs of the Agency are in 2004–05; and what they were in 2003–04. [212156]

Mr. Caplin: The number of personnel working for the Ministry of Defence Police (police officers and civilians) in financial year 2004–05 was 3,736.8 as at 31 December 2004.

The number of personnel working for the MOD Police in Scotland in financial year 2004–05 was 828 as at 31 December 2004.

The full personnel costs of the Agency will not be known until the end of the financial year, the budget in financial year 2004–05 is £158.644 million.

The number of personnel working for the MOD Police in January 2004 was 3,650.5.

The number of personnel working for the MOD Police in Scotland in January 2004 were 835.5. The personnel costs of the Agency in January 2004 were £13.018 million.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Defence Estates Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; and what the personnel costs of the agency (i) are in 2004–05 and (ii) were in 2003–04. [213084]

Mr. Caplin: The Agency currently employs 2,480 civilian and service staff of which 230 civilians are based in Scotland. UK location data of Service personnel are published in the document governing UK Regular Forces Distribution across the UK. The Defence Analytical Services Agency is, however, currently reviewing the source data and process by which location statistics are produced. The outcome of this review is due to be announced shortly.

The personnel costs of the Agency were £86 million in 2003–04, including salaries, performance pay or bonuses, overtime, allowances, social security costs and other pension costs but excluding the costs of any early retirements.

Personnel costs for 2004–05 will not be finalised until April 2005. These costs will, however, appear in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts which will be published before the summer recess and a copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997. [213667]

Mr. Caplin: Ministry of Defence expenditure on external assistance, of which consultancy is a part, is available in the Libraries of both Houses for the years 1995–96 to 2003–04. While this is broken down by various categories, the MOD does not capture and record specific expenditure on consultants carrying out staff surveys. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213776]

Mr. Caplin: Information on expenditure on cleaning costs incurred for each year since 1997 is not separately identified in the accounting records and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213797]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence does not hold central records for the information sought, and to collect the information would be at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213805]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants remain the responsibility of the individuals.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd, South constituency, the effects on Clwyd, South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210326]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has a small presence within Clwyd, solely in the form of four Army Cadet Force centres, one of which is shared with the Air Training Corps. They have not undergone any significant changes since 1997.

In 2001, the Defence Procurement Agency placed a five year contract with Ruth Lee Ltd. of Corwen, who design and manufacture fire and rescue equipment.

Future Rapid Effects System

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the development of the Future Rapid Effects System. [214097]

Mr. Ingram: FRES is in the early stages of the initial Assessment Phase. This phase will define the FRES capability and the optimum strategy for acquiring it.

Atkins, under the strategic direction of the Department, will lead a number of activities during this phase to inform the Ministry of Defence's future decision making.

The next key milestone is the award of contracts designed to better understand, and where necessary mitigate, the risks associated with the physical and electronic architecture of the vehicles. It is planned to have these contracts in place by the end of March 2005.

Iran

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether there are security implications relating to signals equipment, frequencies and codes arising from the seizure by Iran of UK armed forces' equipment. [211812]

Mr. Ingram: There are none.

Military Death (Amesbury)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the circumstances were of the death of a soldier who was crushed when an armoured vehicle overturned in Amesbury, Wiltshire in the first week of

December 2004; to what regiment those involved belonged; when he expects an inquest to be held; what steps have been taken to establish a Board of Inquiry into the incident; and at what time and date the Health and Safety Executive were informed of the incident. [208867]

Mr. Caplin: The incident in question was a road traffic accident involving a Saxon armoured vehicle, which occurred on 3 December 2004, on the A345 between Netheravon and Figheldean. Two soldiers of 1st Battalion the Coldstream Guards were involved, one of whom died. The circumstances are subject to an ongoing investigation by the Wiltshire police. A Service Board of Inquiry was convened on 6 December 2004. The Health and Safety Executive has not been informed, as is usual when the police do not consider that an accident is work-related.

The inquest to determine the cause of death is a matter for HM coroner.

Operative Activities (Expenditure)

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the net cash outflow from operating activities in financial year 2003–04 was by the *(a)* British Forces Cyprus, *(b)* British Forces Gibraltar, *(c)* Permanent Joint Headquarters, *(d)* Sovereign Base Areas Administration and *(e)* British Forces Falkland Islands management groups. [205437]

Mr. Ingram: The Chief of Joint Operations (CJO) Top Level Budget TLB net cash outflow, net of operations, from operating activities in financial year 2003–04 was as follows:

	£ million
British Forces Cyprus	166
British Forces Gibraltar	61
Permanent Joint Headquarters	63
Sovereign Base Areas Administration	12
British Forces Falkland Islands	69

The operations cash flow was:

	£ million
British Forces Cyprus	7
British Forces Gibraltar	1
Permanent Joint Headquarters	252
Sovereign Base Areas Administration	0
British Forces Falkland Islands	0

Pilning Rifle Range

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans for the Pilning Rifle Range. [213922]

Mr. Caplin: Following discussions with English Nature, the site was placed on the open market, with best bids invited by 13 December 2004. Four offers were received and were being considered, when a revised proposal was submitted by one bidder. This is now being investigated in line with the requirements of Government Accounting.

RAF Machrihanish

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans his Department has to change RAF Machrihanish from enhanced care and maintenance status; when this status was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement. [213917]

Mr. Caplin: The Ministry of Defence has no current plans to change the present care and maintenance status for the former RAF station. This status was last reviewed when the site transferred to Defence Estates in August 2000.

Service Dentistry

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what cosmetic dental work is offered to military personnel by service dentists; and if he will make a statement. [213946]

Mr. Caplin: Service dentists provide a full range of treatment, similar to that available from NHS providers, for functional and reparative purposes and in doing so aim to achieve a good aesthetic result for the patient.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201431]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201456]

Mr. Caplin: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203465]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the then Minister for the Cabinet Office (Ruth Kelly) on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204305]

Mr. Caplin: No departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary Select Committees in their official capacity since May 1997.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the contracts signed by his special advisers differ from the Model Contract for Special Advisers. [207239]

Mr. Caplin: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W.

Torture-obtained Information

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has used information obtained by the use of torture by another country since May 1997. [211634]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 413W.

Veterans' Appeals Panel

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to establish an appeals panel, independent of his Department, for veterans whose claims have been rejected by the Discretionary Award Panel and the Discretionary Award Appeals Panel; and if he will make a statement. [214286]

Mr. Caplin: Any claimant whose case has been rejected by the Ministry of Defence's Discretionary Award Appeals Panel has the right to appeal to the independent Pensions Ombudsman, and after that to the High Court on points of law. Under the new Armed Forces Compensation Scheme, appeals against MOD decisions on attributable awards relating to deaths, injuries or illnesses which were caused on or after 6 April 2005, will be heard by the independent Pension Appeals Tribunal.

Wounded British Soldiers

Mr. Keith Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions he has visited wounded British soldiers in the UK in the last 24 months. [210195]

Mr. Hoon *[holding answer 24 January 2005]*: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 899W to the hon. Member for North Tayside (Mr. Wishart).

PRIME MINISTER

Arctic Convoys

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister what method was used to select the invitees to the reception to be held in Downing Street on 7 March in recognition of those who served on the Arctic Convoys during the Second World War; and if he will make a statement. [214284]

The Prime Minister: Representatives of the three main veterans' organisations associated with the wartime convoys to Northern Russia, namely the Russian Convoy Club, North Russia Club and the Merchant Navy Association, were invited to submit the names and addresses of veterans, including spouses/carers where required, who might be able and willing to attend the reception.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister whether he plans to announce a decision on 7 March on whether to award a medal specific to those who served in the Arctic Convoys; and if he will make a statement. [214285]

The Prime Minister: Those who took part in the wartime convoys to Russia were honoured at the time with the Atlantic Star. This remains the position. However, the Government continue to consider this matter.

Committee on Standards in Public Life

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Prime Minister what the average cost of an inquiry by the Committee on Standards in Public Life has been in the last 12-month period for which figures are available. [213770]

The Prime Minister: The Committee on Standards in Public Life published its 10th report "Getting the Balance Right: Implementing Standards of Conduct in Public Life" on 19 January 2005 copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. The costs of the 10th inquiry are set out in the report. No other inquiries were undertaken by the committee in the last 12 months.

European Constitution

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 583W, on the European Constitution, (1) if he will list the stakeholders and their affiliation; if he will list the meetings held; on what documents the discussions have been based; and if he will place copies in the Library; [215291]

(2) if he will list the officials authorised to participate in such discussions; and whether Civil Service codes of conduct apply to such discussions. [215298]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer of 31 January 2004, *Official Report*, column 583W. All meetings are conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code, the Civil Service Code and the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Freedom of Information

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister if he will arrange for *(a)* a link to the publication scheme for his Office and *(b)* an email address for applications for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to be placed on his Office's website. [215354]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. A link to the Cabinet Office's publication scheme is available on the No. 10 website. The email address for requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 can be found in the Cabinet Office's publication scheme.

Her Majesty the Queen

Mr. Webb: To ask the Prime Minister how often he meets Her Majesty the Queen; and when the last such meeting took place. [214449]

The Prime Minister: I meet Her Majesty the Queen at various functions and events. In addition, with the exception of those occasions when Her Majesty the

Queen has not been in London or I have been abroad or in Northern Ireland, I have been received in audience on the usual weekly basis since May 1997.

Iraq

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Prime Minister what representations he has made concerning the ill treatment of prisoners by Iraqi forces in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213566]

The Prime Minister: The Government are engaged in a frequent dialogue with the Iraqi Government about the need to respect human rights. We are offering support to the Human Rights Ministry in Baghdad and through a team of prison officers and police experts in Basra to advise and mentor their Iraqi colleagues in better prison management in the South of Iraq.

My Special Representative on Human Rights in Iraq, my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Ann Clwyd), raised our concerns with the head of the Southern Iraq Office of the Ministry of Human Rights while she was in Basra on 1 February.

Lord Birt

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what reports and recommendations by Lord Birt in the course of his work in *(a)* the Cabinet Office and *(b)* as an adviser to him are available to hon. Members; [213468]

(2) if he will list the reports compiled for him by Lord Birt in each of the last four years; and in what policy areas he has been advised by him. [215365]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my noble Friend the Lord Bassam of Brighton on 2 February 2005, *Official Report, House of Lords*, c. WA53–54.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister what grade of security clearance is accorded to Lord Birt; what secretarial and research backing he is given; and where his desk is located. [215401]

The Prime Minister: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given my noble Friend the Lord Bassam of Brighton on 2 February 2005, *Official Report, House of Lords*, c. WA53–54.

Lord Birt has the appropriate level of security clearance to do his job.

Ministerial Visits

Pete Wishart: To ask the Prime Minister how many times he has made an official visit to *(a)* an injured soldier and *(b)* bereaved families of soldiers. [214575]

The Prime Minister: I have visited members of the armed forces both in the United Kingdom and abroad, and have met injured personnel on these occasions.

I also met several bereaved families at the Remembrance Ceremony at St. Paul's Cathedral in October 2003. I express my deepest sympathy to all families who have lost loved ones, as well as my sincerest and most heartfelt gratitude for the sacrifice made by those injured and killed in the course of duty.

Nelson Mandela

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met Mr. Nelson Mandela; and what matters were discussed. [215265]

The Prime Minister: I last met Nelson Mandela on 3 February 2004 during his visit to London. We discussed a wide range of issues, including The Commission for Africa and the UK's Presidency of the G8 this year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Aerospace Industry

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the current levels of employment in the UK aerospace industry. [214088]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Employment in the UK aerospace industry increased by over 4 per cent. to 121,979 between 2002 and 2003[1].

[1] UK Aerospace Facts and Figures 2003—Society of British Aerospace Companies

Animal Experiments

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what incentives are offered by the Government to UK manufacturers who choose not to carry out experimental testing on animals. [202831]

Ms Hewitt: Under UK and international law new products must be tested for the purposes of environmental, workplace and consumer safety. This may involve the use of animals. If so, the use will be licensed under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

The principles of the Act are that animal testing may only be licensed if there are no non-animal alternatives and, where animals must be used, their numbers and suffering are to be minimised. The number of animal procedures performed each year has been falling steadily and is now at half the level it was 30 years ago. Since 1998, there has been a ban on the use of animals to test cosmetics.

The Government recognise that there are concerns about this issue and take a leading role in Europe in encouraging the development and adoption of alternatives to all forms of animal use in science. In May 2004 we established the National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research (NC3Rs), which will also be working with regulators on the acceptance of alternative methods for regulatory toxicology. The National Centre has funding of over £600,000.

Arms Sales (Indonesia)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the Export Credits Guarantee Department issued guarantees to Alvis in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia. [214150]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* 30 January 1995 and 30 September 1996.

Ellington Colliery

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much in public funds has been made available to UK Coal in support of Ellington Colliery, Northumberland. [213887]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Ellington Colliery did not receive any support under the UK Coal Operating Aid Scheme during 2000–02. In 2004, UK Coal plc. was allocated £2.168 million of Coal Investment Aid to support planned investment spend at Ellington to March 2006. One payment of £850,000 has been made from this award. This represented 28.73 per cent. reimbursement of approved investment costs incurred and defrayed during January-September 2004.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assistance has been given to small charities and religious organisations to ensure that they are able to comply with the Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) Regulations 2003 and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003. [213525]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* In addition to press and online promotional campaigns, information sessions (including a number specifically aimed at religious and other voluntary sector organisations), and Acas-published practical guidance on promoting equality in the workplace, the DTI has provided specific support for voluntary and community sector organisations on the Employment Equality Regulations. In 2003–04, £625,000 was made available for a range of projects across Great Britain looking at producing and disseminating guidance, training and information materials. In 2004–05, funding was more than doubled to £1.4 million. Much of the funding was directed at meeting the specific needs of religious organisations, lesbian, gay and bisexual groups and other voluntary sector organisations and their client and constituency groups.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Scientific Steering Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214299]

Mr. Alexander: The EU Scientific Committee, CREST (Comite de Recherche Scientifique et Technique) met 10 times in total during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies.

During the Italian Presidency, meetings took place on 5 September, and 5 December and in Genoa on 27 October 2003. During the Irish Presidency, meetings took place in Brussels on 29 January and 29 June and in Galway on 1 April 2004. During the Dutch Presidency, meetings took place in Brussels on 16 July, 1 October and 10 December and in Enschede on 21 October 2004.

Officials from the Office of Science and Technology (DTI) represented the UK at all of the above meetings. Additionally Research Councils UK attended one meeting where the agenda called for their expertise in the governance of basic research systems.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much of the Renewable Energy Initiative of the Export Credits Guarantee Department has been allocated to projects; and if she will make a statement. [213394]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* While the Renewable Energy Initiative continues to produce a number of inquiries to ECGD, none of these prospects has yet developed to the stage of becoming firm business. As a result, none of the available ECGD cover has yet been allocated.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial support has been made available in each year since 1997 through the Export Credits Guarantee Department for *(a)* fossil fuel power plants and *(b)* carbon capture and storage sequestration technology, broken down by country of receipt. [212135]

Mr. Alexander: The value of guarantees issued by ECGD year-by-year since 1997 in respect of the construction of fossil fuel power plants is:

	£ million
1998	
Anguilla	1
Brazil	12
China	233
St. Kitts and Nevis	7
Turkey	18
Zimbabwe	9
1999	
Egypt	7
India	84
Malaysia	756
Mexico	12
Oman	30
Taiwan	106
Vietnam	24
2000	
Dominican Republic	19
Mexico	63
Philippines	58
Taiwan	18
Turkey	43
2001	
Bangladesh	6
Brazil	8
Turkey	31
2002	
Israel	16

ECGD has not been approached to provide support for carbon capture and storage sequestration technology products.

Export Volumes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the volume of UK exports to *(a)* the USA and *(b)* China was in each of the last 10 years. [213597]

Mr. Alexander: Data on the UK's exports of goods and services to the USA and China are given in the following table. Data in volume terms are not available on an individual country basis.

UK exports of goods and services to USA and China 1994–2003

£ million

	Current prices	
	USA	*China*
1994	27,044	1,057
1995	28,507	1,038
1996	32,917	976
1997	35,199	1,143
1998	36,219	1,156
1999	41,388	1,659
2000	48,191	1,911
2001	48,025	2,307
2002	49,747	2,190
2003	50,914	2,750

Source:

United Kingdom Balance of Payments (The Pink Book), ONS

Mobile Phones

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will invite the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services to regulate the marketing of mobile phone services to ensure that it is possible readily to terminate the service, with particular reference to *(a)* ring tones and *(b)* jokes. [213865]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) already regulates the marketing and overall operation of mobile phone services such as ring tones and jokes when they are charged for by premium rate. As a principle, consumers should be able to leave mobile phone services (such as ringtones and jokes) as easily as they can join them—and whenever they choose to do so.

In cases where consumers have been unable to unsubscribe to a service—for example, due to an overcomplicated or convoluted procedure aimed at delaying or preventing someone from opting out of the service—ICSTIS has found these services to be in breach of its Code of Practice (provision on vulnerability). In such cases ICSTIS has imposed fines and/or instructed that access to the service is barred.

The Government and ICSTIS welcomed the recent decision by the mobile networks to formalise the common stop command, ensuring a single common policy for the regulation of subscription services paid for by premium rate SMS. The common stop command is 'stop'.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate her Department has made of how many mobile phones were sold in each of the last five years; what percentage she estimates have become redundant; and what percentage she estimates have been *(a)* recycled and *(b)* otherwise disposed of. [214125]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No data were readily available on the number of handsets sold per year in the last five years. However, industry estimates that 18 million handsets, are replaced every year and that in total over the last two years there have been about five million handsets taken by mobile phone recycling and refurbishment companies in the UK. It is further estimated by industry that about 60 per cent. of the handsets taken for recycling and refurbishment have been refurbished and tested in the UK and then sold for re-use abroad, mostly to Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. The remaining 40 per cent. have been sent for materials recycling.

Post Offices

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to increase the extent to which the availability of the Post Office cheque payment service is advertised. [202752]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

There are no plans to do this.

Direct Payment is now the normal method of payment for benefits and pensions. The Government have always made it clear that there would be an alternative for the minority of people who are genuinely unable to be paid by Direct Payment into an account. The cheque payment was therefore designed in consultation with a range of customer representative groups and detailed information about it was circulated to them and to all hon. Members in May of last year.

At the end of the conversion process those customers who have not provided account details will automatically be moved to the cheque method of payment, which can be cashed at a Post Office, or can be paid into a bank account.

Power Station (Plymouth)

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the effect on the creation of new jobs on land at Langage Plymouth of delays in progress with the power station project; if she will vitiate the licence granted in respect thereof; and if she will make a statement. [213982]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The Secretary of State granted consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to build a 1,010MW CCGT station at Langage on 20 November 2000. The consent is valid for five years and it is a commercial decision for the developer as to when to start construction.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much energy generated in the UK in 2003–04 was derived from *(a)* wind energy, *(b)* solar power and *(c)* biomass. [213371]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The information is as follows:

(a) In 2003 wind energy accounted for 0.3 per cent. of electricity generated in the UK. In the same period, of the renewables eligible under the Renewables Obligation wind energy contributed 0.39 per cent. of electricity sales by licensed suppliers in the UK.

(b) For solar power the proportions were less than 0.01 per cent. on both bases.

(c) Biomass accounted for 0.63 per cent. of electricity generated in the UK in 2003, while biomass eligible under the Renewables Obligation contributed 0.47 per cent. of electricity sales by licensed suppliers in the UK.

Telephone Sales

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps her Department is taking to control *(a)* telephone cold calling and *(b)* unsolicited silent calls from commercial power diallers from (i) within and (ii) outside the UK. [213502]

Ms Hewitt: The information is as follows:

(a) My Department introduced the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) scheme, under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 1999. The TPS scheme provides protection to subscribers from unsolicited telephone cold calls, which either originate from the UK or are made from abroad on behalf of UK companies, irrespective of whether they are dialled manually or made by commercial power diallers.

(b) The Communications Act 2003 confers powers on the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to regulate forms of behaviour, which fall within the Act's definition of persistent misuse of an electronic communications network or service. Unsolicited silent calls made by commercial power diallers are an example of behaviour, which might represent persistent misuse. Ofcom has taken action against companies, which were found to have generated unacceptably high levels of unsolicited silent calls.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many prosecutions of companies were brought in 2003–04 for breaches of the Working Time Directive; [213369]

(2) how many visits were made to companies in 2003–04 by officials from her Department or from agencies for which her Department is responsible to verify compliance with the Working Time Directive. [213370]

Mr. Sutcliffe: During the 12 months to 31 March 2004, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Infoline received over 5,000 inquiries on Working Time issues. All those requiring further action were followed up and HSE officers made 47 visits specifically to verify compliance with the Working Time Regulations. The HSE brought no prosecutions in this period, but one prosecution was concluded during that period—in which the company concerned was fined a total of £30,000 for four breaches of the Working Time Regulations. The other enforcement agencies; the Civil Aviation Authority, Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the Vehicle Operator Services Agency, made no visits and undertook no prosecutions for breaches of the Working Time Regulations in the period 2003–04.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-Procurement Prosecutions

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been of adults found to have bought alcohol on behalf of persons under the age of 18 in *(a)* pubs, bars and clubs and *(b)* off-licences and other licensed retailers in each of the last 10 years . [210686]

Paul Goggins: The available information on persons proceeded against is contained in the first table.

Number of persons proceeded against for certain liquor law offences[1], England and Wales 1994 to 2003

	Purchasing intoxicating liquor for consumption by person under 18 in a bar	*Licence holder knowingly delivering intoxicating liquor to a person under 18 years for consumption off the premises*
1994	4	3
1995	4	12
1996	4	2
1997	5	2
1998	5	4
1999	5	1
2000	6	—
2001	11	1
2002	23	4
2003	24	6

[1] These data are on a principal offence basis.

The second table contains information on persons given penalty notices for disorder for offences relating to buying, selling etc. alcohol to persons under 18 in England and Wales.

Penalty notices for disorder issued relating to buying, selling etc. alcohol to persons under 18 in England and Wales 2002 to 2004 (provisional figures)

	2002–03[1]	*2004*
Offence breakdown		
Selling alcohol to person under 18[2]	—	79
Purchasing alcohol in licensed premises for person under 18[2]	—	19
Delivering alcohol to person under 18[2]	—	7
Purchasing alcohol for consumption in a bar in licensed premises for person under 18	2	46
Allowing consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 in bar in licensed premises[2]	—	6
Total PNDs issued relating to buying, selling etc. alcohol to persons under 18	2	157

[1] Piloted in Essex, Metropolitan police (part), North Wales (part) and West Midlands from August 2002 for 12 months.

[2] New offence added to PND scheme from 1 November 2004.

Identity Cards/Passports

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has initiated into the use of biometrics for individual identification. [208357]

Mr. Browne: A study was commissioned from the National Physical Laboratory. The results of this study along with other research on identity cards has been published on the website www.identitycards.gov.uk

The UK Passport Service is procuring a facial recognition system, which will provide a 'proof of concept' capability. This is expected to be operational by the end of 2005.

The Police Information Technology Organisation has published a roadmap on the subject of personal identification within the police service which considers the technologies likely to be most appropriate. It looks at how mature these technologies are and what research and development work will be needed before suitable applications can be developed and deployed to support policing.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library the information available to his Department on the accuracy of *(a)* biometric tests and *(b)* biometric card readers; if he will list the biometric card readers his Department has assessed; what assessment he has made of the accuracy of (i) fingerprint tests, (ii) iris tests and (iii) face recognition tests; and what assessment he has made of the (A) problems and (B) benefits associated with each technology. [206206]

Mr. Browne: Work was commissioned on biometrics from NPL (National Physical Laboratory) on the feasibility of the use of biometrics in an identity card scheme. I have placed copies in the Library, and it is also available on the identity cards publications web page (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/identitycards/publications.html). Related work is available on the Communications and Electronic Security Group website (http://www.cesg.gov.uk) in particular the "Best Practice" standards for testing and reporting on biometric device performance and the "Biometrics Testing Final Report", both of which deal with the testing of biometric devices.

The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) has conducted large scale tests on the operational accuracy of fingerprint based identification systems for policing purposes, namely on the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS), and more recently for its successor, IDENT1. PITO has produced an 'Identification Roadmap' which identifies issues on biometric identification as they relate to its use in policing, both now and in the future. I have placed copies in the Library.

A very basic benchmark exercise was carried out in 2000 on the Immigration and Asylum Fingerprint Identification system in order to assess the accuracy of the system. The only test carried out involved hard copies often-print fingerprint forms which were searched and stored on the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS).

The Identity Cards Programme is actively investigating the performance of operational systems which enrol and match biometrics, including fingerprints, face and iris. Our conclusions are that the findings of the National Physical Laboratory reports are supported by the information gained from operational biometric systems.

Some biometric technology has been used in the UK Passport Service biometric enrolment trial, the results of which will be published in due course, although it is important to note that this was not a systematic test of equipment, nor was it a technology trial. Rather than evaluate equipment, much of which may be superseded by the time are first issued we are working with other Departments and with expert advice to set the requirements for performance. These requirements, and the requirements for evaluation to demonstrate performance, we shall take to the market when the Identity Cards programme enters its procurement stage which is subject to approval of the Identity Cards Bill currently before Parliament.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what evaluation he has conducted of the security of the proposed national identity register; and what weaknesses have been identified. [210160]

Mr. Browne: The ID Cards Scheme has not yet reached the Gateway 1 stage of the Office of Government Commerce classification of major programmes which is the stage at which a formal security evaluation is required. However it is likely that the evaluation will conclude that the scheme will be part of the country's Critical National Infrastructure (CNI). As such it will be subject to Government security accreditation in accordance with the Manual of Protective Security and the relevant international standard (ISO/IEC 17799). A pan government security accreditor has been appointed from the Central Sponsor for Information Assurance (CSIA) and a team of specialist security consultants appointed to manage the accreditation and end to end resilience and security of the scheme.

A formal Threat Assessment has been commissioned and input received from the National Infrastructure Co-ordination Centre (NISCC) and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS). These will form a key part of the security evaluation. The Communications Electronic Security Group (CESG) which is part of GCHQ and the National Technical Information Assurance Authority are fully engaged in the project. Finally both an Accreditation Panel and a Security Working Group, involving all security stakeholders, are already in place and meetings held on a regular basis.

Identity Cards Bill

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his statement of 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1950, on the Identity Cards Bill, how he intends that the Bill, if enacted, should apply to *(a)* Irish citizens commuting into the United Kingdom for employment or recreation and *(b)* Irish citizens who are resident within the United Kingdom; and if he will make a statement. [214410]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: ID cards will be issued to people resident in the United Kingdom, not to those who reside elsewhere and visit the UK, whether on a regular basis or not. The status of Irish citizens in the UK will not change should the Identity Cards Bill be enacted. They will be treated in accordance with the British Nationality Act 1948 and the Ireland Act 1949 and the provisions of the Good Friday Agreement. They may also, if they so wish, choose to be regarded as EU nationals.

Immigration

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for leave to remain were processed after *(a)* 20 days, *(b)* 40 days, *(c)* 60 days, *(d)* 80 days, *(e)* 100 days and *(f)* more than 100 days; and what percentage of the total number of applications each of these represented in each year since 1997; [203221]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is set out in the table.

Leave to remain applications processed during 2002–04

	Total applications processed	*20 days or less*	*21–40 days*	*41–60 days*	*61–80 days*	*80–100 days*	*101 plus days*
2002							
Number	288,300	114,115	50,975	34,900	20,895	22,450	44,965
Percentage of total	—	40	18	12	7	8	16
2003							
Number	387,280	214,155	99,070	33,010	12,585	7,535	20,930
Percentage of total	—	55	26	9	3	2	5
2004							
Number	281,305	162,495	71,810	20,520	11,780	7,485	7,215
Percentage of total	—	58	26	7	4	3	3

Notes:

1. Comparable data is not available prior to 2002 due to changes in data recording between old and existing databases.
2. The information for 2004 is for the period between 1 January 2004 and 6 December 2004.
3. The processing time is taken from the date that the application was received until the dispatch date.
4. These figures are based on unvalidated information drawn from internal management systems, and there may be data quality variations.
5. Figures have been rounded to the nearest five.

Judicial System

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Department is taking to ensure all citizens have equal access to justice. [209488]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office is committed to ensuring that all citizens have equal access to justice. We recognise that public confidence in the Criminal Justice System is crucial to the delivery of fair and equitable justice. Ensuring that members of the public have confidence in the CJS will lead to more frequent reporting of crime and the greater likelihood of justice being done.

We are developing the infrastructure to ensure the effective delivery of new Public Sector Agreement (PSA) targets. The new PSA was developed to reflect the Criminal Justice System (CJS) vision for 2008 which aims to ensure that the public has confidence that the CJS is effective and serves all communities fairly.

The Home Office is working with Local Criminal Justice Boards to improve levels of community engagement, meet communities' needs and priorities and encourage the participation of local people in the delivery of justice. We are working to increase public understanding and awareness of the CJS using a variety of media including the CJS Online Website and virtual walkthroughs for victims, witnesses, jurors (and defendants to demystify the experience in advance.

The Home Office has a strong commitment to ensure that those who have been the victim of a crime or were a witness to a crime receive the appropriate levels of care and support.

Offender Management

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will carry out a risk assessment of *(a)* possible overlap of the National Offender Management Service with other Home Office programmes and *(b)* how such an overlap might affect programme effectiveness. [201432]

Paul Goggins: A comprehensive risk strategy for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) is in place. This includes an assessment of the risk of overlap with other Home Office programmes.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of *(a)* the level of risk that his Department will fail to deliver the National Offender Management Service change programme and *(b)* the consequences of such failure. [201434]

Paul Goggins: An assessment of risk has been carried out for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). Contingency planning is in hand to manage this risk.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications for cost-effectiveness of the purchaser or provider model proposed for the Probation Service in delivering the proposed National Offender Management Service reforms. [204965]

Paul Goggins: The rationale for a purchaser provider split is contained in Lord Carter's review of correctional services. This split will enable the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to drive up the quality of work with offenders. Individual offender managers will be the users of services commissioned by the National Offender Manager (NOM) or Regional Offender Managers (ROMs), and accountable for the effective implementation of sentence plans.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the business case for the introduction of contestability and market testing into the National Offender Management Service is established in *(a)* Patrick Carter's independent report Managing Offenders—Reducing Crime and *(b)* the Government's response Reducing Crime—Changing Lives. [210786]

Paul Goggins: Yes. Lord Carter's report makes the case for contestability as one of its key recommendations and this recommendation was accepted in the Government's response published on 6 January 2004.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the provisions on the organisation of offender management set out in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.4 (page 35) of National Offender Management Service—Next Steps (published 27 October 2004) remain part of the plan for the Service; and if he will make a statement. [210788]

Paul Goggins: The paragraphs referred to remain relevant to the work of the National Offender Management Service.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the introduction of the National Offender Management Service on the input of the voluntary sector to the criminal justice system. [213551]

Paul Goggins: The creation of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) offers a unique opportunity to sustain and expand existing voluntary sector work with offenders, while opening up the prospect of new areas for partnership and engagement with the voluntary and community sector. A new Voluntary Sector Unit has been established to provide a national lead and, will work closely with the recently appointed Regional Offender Managers, assisting them in being able to reach, support and work effectively with voluntary groups in their regions. The work of the Unit will be overseen by an independently chaired Advisory Group drawn from the voluntary sector, prisons and probation. A voluntary sector representative has been appointed to the NOMS Board, voluntary groups are included in the working group on Offender Management and proposals are being developed for a voluntary sector stakeholder group to help develop the mixed economy of provision for NOMS.

NOMS published a draft strategy "The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector in the National Offender Management Service" on 31 January 2005. This has been sent to voluntary and community groups and staff working with them in prisons and probation for consultation. The consultation period will run to 25April 2005 and a revised strategy will be produced in the summer.

NOMS commissioned a study in Yorkshire and Humberside by Sheffield Hallam University entitled "Enhancing the Role of the Voluntary Sector" The study examines the extent and nature of current voluntary sector involvement with correctional services, identifies good practice in working relationships, assesses the potential for extending involvement, identifies barriers and capacity building needs and suggests ways to help to overcome these.

Copies of these reports have been widely circulated and are also available on the Home Office and Prison Service websites.

A major conference and exhibition was held on 22 November 2004, to highlight the contribution made by voluntary and community groups to support the delivery of services to prisoners, offenders and their families. The event was attended by over 500 delegates.

Funding for 2005 and 2006 has been secured from the Home Office Active Communities Directorate's Change Up programme to support the development of the voluntary sector in this area. This includes training, advice and support to help the voluntary sector prepare for contestability. We will also encourage projects where large organisations work with smaller, local groups; and a project to address the needs of under-represented groups, particularly those from the black and minority ethnic sector.

A Strategic Partnership Project has been established, led by Clinks, the organisation that supports voluntary and community groups working with offenders and their families. This has provided NOMS with a network of organisations and a quick and easy route to consultation. NOMS has been able to fund a Partnership Manager to support and service this work.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether offenders assessed as requiring specific offender behaviour programmes will be placed by regional offender managers in establishments that do not offer the specific programme. [201052]

Paul Goggins: Offender managers will be responsible for the delivery of sentence plans for the whole of the offender's sentence. It is expected that in the majority of cases individuals will be placed in establishments which can meet their needs during the custodial part of the sentence. It is possible that a single establishment will not be able to meet all the needs identified for an individual, particularly for longer custodial sentences, and in these cases the sentence plan could involve the identification of other establishments which met specific needs.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether the purchaser/provider split for the Probation Service in England and Wales will create a conflict of interest. [211568]

Paul Goggins: NOMS is committed to delivering the purchaser/provider split as a means of driving up the quality of work with offenders and will be looking to develop the best possible model for doing so. There will be a clear separation between purchasing and providing roles in order to avoid a conflict of interest.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the role will be of the 10 regional offender managers as employers for offender management of the Probation Service. [211569]

Paul Goggins: Under the existing board structure of the Probation Service, offender managers will remain employed by boards and therefore line managed by chief officers. ROMs will not formally employ offender managers but arrangements are being agreed with boards and chief officers which will allow ROMs to direct the work of offender management through chief officers.

Student Visas

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of processing visa applications from overseas students coming to study at universities in the UK. [214264]

Mr. Browne: On 1 August 2003 the Home Office introduced charges for leave to remain applications, including those from international students. Fees were calculated to recover the full administrative costs (including staffing and overhead costs) of processing applications to the point of conveying a decision.

We have recently consulted stakeholders on proposals to extend the principle of cost recovery charging, to include the costs of providing an appeal function and the costs of delivering enforcement activity. The consultation closed on 8 December 2004. The outcome of the consultation and the final fee levels have been announced on 7 February 2005.

The fee ranges have been calculated using the full cost recovery formula approved by HM Treasury. A full explanation of how the costs are calculated will be laid before Parliament when the Fees Regulations are amended.

Tsunami (Passports)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what charges he is imposing on survivors of the recent tsunami to replace passports lost in the disaster. [208720]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* In response to recent events the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) has agreed to waive the fee for the replacement of those passports of UK nationals that were lost as a result of the recent tsunami in South East Asia.

It was the Passport Service's view that because of the magnitude of the disaster, and the circumstances in which British nationals lost their passports, it was entirely appropriate, given the national response, for those who lost their passports as a result of the disaster to have them replaced free of charge.

Correspondence

John Barrett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when UK Visas will reply to the letter dated 6 January from the hon. Member for Edinburgh West with regard to Hakim Sadi. [213460]

Mr. Browne: The hon. Member's letter of 6 January was referred by UK Visas to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) on 27 January. IND wrote to the hon. Member on 2 February.

Wheel Clamping

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether all wheel clamping firms are now licensed under the Private Security Industry Act 2001; [212129]

(2) if he will make a statement on the work of the Security Industry Association regarding wheel clampers. [212104]

Ms Blears: From 28 February 2005 it will be illegal for wheel-clampers (also know as vehicle immobilisers) to work on private land without a Security Industry Authority (SIA) licence. The SIA started to receive application forms from 30 November 2004 and the total number of applications requested to date is 807.

The Security Industry Authority was set up in March 2003 under the Private Security Industry Act 2001 to regulate the private security sector. Vehicle Immobilisers licensing will only apply to the immobilisation of vehicles parked on private ground where a fee is charged for release. Secondary legislation is currently before Parliament to include the activities of towing away and blocking in as licensable activities.

VIs will need to hold an SIA licence which will involve undertaking and passing a five-day training course, an identity check and a criminal records check. Licensing will ensure that only well-trained and reliable people work in positions of trust. There will also be a public register of VI licence holders.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Community Courts

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will list community courts which have been established in England. [214035]

Mr. Leslie: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 31 January 2005, *Official Report,* 723W.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the total expenditure by his Department on all external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211679]

Mr. Lammy: My Department's net expenditure with consultants in the years requested was as follows:

1996–97:	£1,088,464
2003–04:	£9,016,488

Information on future expenditure with consultants is not available centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The level of expenditure with external consultants reflects a wide-ranging and fast paced programme of change, designed to modernise and increase efficiency, provide better customer service, and value for money.

Delivering such a programme has necessitated the use of external expertise to supplement internal resources.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211614]

Mr. Leslie: My Department has granted no contracts to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years. We do however have contracts with these suppliers which pre-date the period specified. In each case the Department awarded contracts in open competition according to the EU Procurement Regulations, based upon best value for money.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Clwyd South constituency, the effects on Clwyd South of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [210328]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities pf the citizen, and to modernize the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategy objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crown Court trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

The range of the Department's policies and actions is wide and the statistical information relating to all of that activity is not collected on a constituency basis. Consequently, the information requested in the question cannot be provided in the form requested except at a disproportionate cost. However, statistical information about the Department's activities can be found at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statfr.htm as well as at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 64 days in the North Wales criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Clwyd South. This compares with 124 days in the North Wales criminal justice area in the 1997 calendar year.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Kingston upon Hull North constituency, the effects on Kingston upon Hull North of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211804]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

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An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 56 days in the Humberside criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Kingston upon

Hull North. This compares with 129 days in the Humberside criminal justice area in the 1997 calendar year.

Mrs. Lawrence: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Preseli Pembrokeshire constituency, the effects on Preseli Pembrokeshire of his Department's policies and actions since it was established. [211324]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crown Court trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates' courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

The range of the Department's policies and actions is wide and the statistical information relating to that activity is not collected on a constituency basis. Consequently, the information requested in the question cannot be provided except at a disproportionate cost. Statistical information about the Department's activities can be found at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statfr.htm as well as at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 33 days in the Dyfed-Powys criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Preseli Pembrokeshire. This compares with 124 days in the Dyfed-Powys criminal justice area in the 1997 calendar year.

EU Committee on the Protection of Individuals

Angus Robertson: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214312]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Group on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214313]

Mr. Leslie: During the period of the presidencies identified in the questions, the Committee established under Article 31 of the Directive 95/46/EC met 10 times, in Brussels, when the relevant departmental policy official of the UK Government was present. During the same period, the working party established under Article 29 of the Directive 95/46/EC met 13 times, in Brussels, when either the UK Information Commissioner or a representative of the Commissioner's Office was present.

European Constitution (Referendum)

Mr. Brady: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what market research, opinion polling and focus group research the Government undertook in relation to the formulation of the question providing for a referendum on the treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe as set out in the European Union Bill; what its cost was; and if he will make a statement. [214653]

Mr. Leslie: There has been no opinion polling, market research or focus group research on the question providing for a referendum on the Treaty establishing a Constitution for the European Union. The question was drafted bearing in mind the Electoral Commission's guidelines which are designed to ensure a question is intelligible. The Electoral Commission's views on the question in Lord Blackwell's Private Member's Bill of July 2004 were also taken into account.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Polling and Research

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission (1) pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1140W, on polling and research, if he will place copies of the research in the Library; [212266]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1140W, on regional government, if he will place in the Library copies of research, focus group and opinion poll material held by the Electoral Commission relating to the referendum on an elected regional assembly in the north east. [213169]

Mr. Viggers: The Electoral Commission has informed me that all the research exercises referred to in my earlier answer should be completed by mid-March.

These will inform the Commission's statutory report on the north east referendum, expected to be published by the autumn. The Commission intends to place details of the supporting research in the Library of the House when the report is published.

Referendums

Mr. Heald: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission what *(a)* advice and *(b)* guidance the Electoral Commission has issued relating to holding a (i) nationwide referendum, (ii) mayoral referendum and (iii) local issues referendum under the Local Government Act 2003 at the same time as a (A) local election, (B) general election and (C) devolved Parliament or regional assembly election; and if he will make a statement. [213120]

Mr. Viggers *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* Under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 the Electoral Commission has a number of responsibilities relating to UK-wide referendums, referendums held in one or more of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and regional referendums in England. It does not have statutory responsibilities in relation to mayoral referendums or local issues referendums under the Local Government Act 2003.

I am informed that the Electoral Commission has issued no advice or guidance in respect of the combinations of elections and referendums listed in the question.

The Commission has, however, on two occasions commented on suggestions for combining elections and referendums. In July 2002 the Electoral Commission issued a statement regarding the possibility of elections to the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales, and English local government elections, being combined with a referendum on the adoption of the single currency. In February 2004, it responded to the ODPM's consultation on combining regional and local referendums and on local referendum rules.

On both occasions, the Commission expressed concerns about the possibility of combination, reflecting its view that on balance it is disadvantageous for elections to be combined with referendums. I understand that the reasons it advanced included concern that cross-party campaigning at the referendum could be confusing for the electorate.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Civil Protection

Andrew George: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in the Cabinet Office in respect of the funding requirements of *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* the Council of the Isles of Scilly to meet their obligations and duties under the (i) Civil Contingencies Act 2004 and (ii) other civil protection regulations. [214217]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have more than doubled their contribution to the cost of local authorities' civil protection activities in England to £38,437 million per year in 2005–06—a 121 per cent. increase. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Cabinet Office have regular discussions on a range of issues, including the distribution of civil protection funding for local authorities. As a result of these discussions, the civil protection requirements of all local authorities in England have been considered and local authorities were notified in December 2004 of their funding allocation for 2005–06.

Communities Plan

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much central Government expenditure on the Communities Plan is to be allocated to each programme which is part of the plan. [211930]

Keith Hill: The following table provides a breakdown of spending on programmes included in the Communities Plan.

£ million

Programme	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Regional Housing Pot and predecessor programmes	2,686	2,451	2,504
Arms Length Housing Management Organisations (ALMOs)	322	[1]752	961
Disabled Facilities Grant	112	114	104
Homelessness/B and B	89	122	81
Other housing programmes	618	440	455
Housing Market Renewal Fund	70	151	284
Thames Gateway	40	168	194
Growth Areas	21	62	65
Community Infrastructure Fund	0	0	0
Local Environment / liveability (inc. skills)	39	76	78
Regional Development Agencies	1,524	1,456	1,487
European Regional Development Fund	273	292	185
English Partnerships	134	586	386
Other Urban Programmes	18	29	19
Planning (including Planning Delivery Grant)	56	143	183
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	400	450	525
New Deal for Communities	247	271	273
New Ventures Fund	106	96	82
Total	6,754	7,658	7,865

£ million

Programme	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*Total*
Regional Housing Pot and predecessor programmes	2,632	2,920	13,193
Arms Length Housing Management Organisations (ALMOs)	891	887	3,813
Disabled Facilities Grant	121	121	572
Homelessness/B and B	86	94	471
Other housing programmes	471	471	2,455
Housing Market Renewal Fund	336	451	1,292
Thames Gateway	203	206	811
Growth Areas	89	188	426
Community Infrastructure Fund	50	150	200
Local Environment / liveability (inc. skills)	80	90	364
Regional Development Agencies	1,570	1,598	7,635
European Regional Development Fund	254	254	1,259
English Partnerships	358	319	1,783
Other Urban Programmes	19	44	128
Planning (including Planning Delivery Grant)	154	144	678
Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	525	525	2,425
New Deal for Communities	277	246	1,313
New Ventures Fund	94	94	471
Total	8,209	8,802	39,289

[1] This figure includes £180 million designated for gap funding for stock transfers during the SR04 period.

Notes:

1. All figures are rounded to the nearest £ million. Totals may not add up, due to rounding.
2. All figures are planned expenditure, except for 2003–04 where out-turn figures are shown.
3. Figures for EP from 2004–05 onwards include an adjustment due to changes to the accounting treatment acquisitions. Overall these accounting changes result in an increase of approximately £850 million in the Departmental Expenditure Limit over this period.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average band D council tax has been in each county council area in each year since 1997–98. [211973]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is in the table.

Area average band D council tax

£

County	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Bedfordshire	764	808	877	929	981	1,072	1,194	1,286
Buckinghamshire	639	703	766	813	868	947	1,098	1,173
Cambridgeshire	590	645	723	784	842	948	1,045	1,131
Cheshire	710	827	865	919	975	1,031	1,134	1,193
Cornwall[1]	647	706	748	820	864	941	1,050	1,127
Cumbria	759	826	868	919	964	1,042	1,175	1,238
Derbyshire	734	809	873	933	989	1,082	1,178	1,232
Devon	629	719	776	822	877	965	1,142	1,211
Dorset	705	768	829	876	930	1,024	1,186	1,260
Durham	779	859	896	937	979	1,113	1,211	1,288
East Sussex	691	748	804	868	945	1,007	1,207	1,279
Essex	645	737	786	845	909	995	1,150	1,217
Gloucestershire	642	710	771	843	900	987	1,142	1,207
Hampshire	659	719	779	819	865	944	1,083	1,148
Hertfordshire	628	702	763	808	857	941	1,104	1,171
Kent	631	708	765	826	880	970	1,095	1,166
Lancashire	763	848	914	963	1,003	1,083	1,190	1,252
Leicestershire	704	761	803	859	914	1,008	1,099	1,184
Lincolnshire	658	739	787	831	879	961	1,053	1,117
Norfolk	620	707	779	831	889	983	1,131	1,207
North Yorkshire	626	692	754	798	863	965	1,127	1,203
Northamptonshire	659	708	765	816	860	978	1,071	1,140
Northumberland	736	827	898	954	1,010	1,079	1,204	1,259
Nottinghamshire	769	842	925	978	1,036	1,131	1,249	1,323
Oxfordshire	635	696	771	834	895	978	1,128	1,204
Shropshire	666	724	791	837	890	998	1,148	1,221
Somerset	658	719	770	823	877	983	1,110	1,180
Staffordshire	632	701	760	804	880	943	1,084	1,161
Suffolk	651	706	761	816	873	982	1,164	1,216
Surrey	627	706	764	807	848	946	1,128	1,187
Warwickshire	713	765	823	872	923	1,036	1,133	1,206
West Sussex	652	713	759	802	852	939	1,112	1,179
Wiltshire	650	731	781	841	908	997	1,108	1,182
Worcestershire	616	674	735	806	882	974	1,090	1,171

[1] Including the Isles of Scilly

Fire Service

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who is consulted on proposals for changing practices at fire stations in Lancashire. [214816]

Mr. Raynsford: Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS) have advised that the following groups were consulted:

All LFRS stations and departments
Audit Commission
British Approvals for Fire Equipment
District Council leaders and CEO's
Unitary Authority leaders and CEO's
British Retail Consortium
Combined Fire Authority Members
Chief Fire Officers (NW Region)
Chamber of Commerce/Business Link
District Partnership Officers
Environment Agency
Fire Certificate holders
Fire Prevention association
Health and Safety Executive
Health Authority/Acute Care Trusts/PCT's
Local Government Association
MP's and North West MEP's
NW Regional Management Board
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
Other Emergency Services
Other Miscellaneous
Parish Councils
Social Services
Universities
Unions (ACTS, FBU, UNISON)
Victims of fire

Summary draft Year 2 Action Plan leaflets were distributed as follows:

Libraries
Doctors surgeries and Health Centres

It is also understood from LFRS that 1,014 copies of the draft Year 2 Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) Action Plan were distributed, 4,790 information leaflets were distributed to public libraries, town halls and information centres etc. throughout Lancashire. In addition, the Combined Fire Authority website had been utilised for consultation purposes; presentations had been given to LFRS Area Commanders and Departmental Heads who in turn had disseminated the information to staff; copies of the Plan had been sent to 15 Members of Parliament, the nine NW Members of the European Parliament, all district council leaders and chief executive officers and Lancashire county council; the draft Year 2 IRMP Action Plan was considered at Crime and Disorder Partnership and Local Strategic Partnership meetings and letters outlining the purpose and reason behind IRMP and copies of the draft Year 2 Action Plan were also sent to 24 Fire Certificate holders, six victims of fire, 163 parish councils, 26 NHS Trusts and numerous other consultees.

Opinion Research Services (ORS) were commissioned to carry out a public consultation programme with Lancashire residents. In addition, two additional Scrutiny Panels were organised by LFRS. These involved minority groups and a panel made up of Prince's Trust Team Members.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the Department's policy is on fire prevention. [213650]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister aims to prevent fire through regulation to ensure that places of work, and new and substantially altered buildings, are made as safe as possible in relation to the assessed risks of fire; through national and local campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of fire and to encourage fire safe behaviour; and through a modernised Fire and Rescue Service with fire prevention at the centre of its work.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister provides additional funding to Fire and Rescue Authorities for work on fire prevention through the Community Fire Safety Innovation Fund, the Arson Control Forum Implementation Fund and as part of the new Home Fire Risk Check Initiative.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what decision the South West Regional Management Board took at its recent meeting with regard to the outline business concern on south west regional control centres for the fire service. [214011]

Mr. Raynsford: The South West Regional Management Board (RMB) was asked to comment on the principles and arguments underlying the outline business case for the FiReControl project. Until the procurement processes are complete the figures in the business case are indicative only and cannot be used as the basis for any decisions. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will be carefully considering the comments of all the RMBs, including that in the south west, in order to ensure the robustness of the business case as it develops, and will issue a response in due course.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many times the Fire Service has been called out on false calls in *(a)* the North West, *(b)* Lancashire and *(c)* Chorley in each of the last five years. [214396]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested for Lancashire and the North West is tabled 2003 is the most recent year for which information is available.

False alarms attended by Fire & Rescue Services

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[2]	*2003*[2]
Lancashire	10,813	10,728	11,137	11,171	11,692
North West[1]	58,161	56,293	57,361	54,366	56,566

[1] The 'North West' refers to the area covered by the following Fire & Rescue Services: Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside.

[2] Data include estimates for false alarms not recorded during periods of national industrial action in 2002 & 2003. Data for 2003 are provisional.

No information is available centrally on fires and false alarms in Chorley. Information from the Lancashire Fire & Rescue Service website (www.lancsfire.govuk/IRMP/Districts/Chorley%20District%20Profile.pdf) indicates there were 501 falsealarms attended in 2000–01 in Chorley; 532 in 2001–02; and 534 in 2002–03.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for the future of the fire service control room in Eastbourne. [214453]

Mr. Raynsford: Fire and Rescue control room services for East Sussex will be operated through the South East Regional Control Centre after it becomes operational, expected at the end of 2007. The order of transfer of fire and rescue services in the South East Region to the regional control centre, and hence the exact timing of the transfer for East Sussex, will depend on the location of the South East Regional Control Centre, which is not yet known. Location announcements are expected in Spring 2005. The use to which the accommodation for the existing control room is put after transfer will be a matter for East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service.

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications for tackling domestic fires if regional control centres are established; and if he will make a statement. [214505]

Mr. Raynsford: The technology to be used in the regional control centres for the Fire and Rescue Service will automatically locate callers from the telephone network, detect the appliance with the appropriate skills and equipment which can be most quickly mobilised to the incident and direct it along the most effective route to the incident. This will help the fire and rescue service to reach all incidents, including domestic fires, quicker and so save more lives.

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fires there have been in Romford in the last five years. [213649]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Fire statistics are compiled by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for each Fire and Rescue Authority. In this case, Romford's fires are reported as part of the London total.

The London Safety Plan[1] (figures prepared by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority) lists the number of fires in the London borough of Havering on an annual average based on a five-year period (1999–00 to 2003–04) as 1,585.

[1] http://www.london-fire.gov.uk/news/media/bp0506_Havering.pdf

Flooding

Llew Smith: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what environmental impact assessment was carried out in connection with his five year plan on sustainable communities; and what evaluation was made of increased threats posed by flooding in earmarking sites to develop these new communities. [214235]

Keith Hill: All additional housing referred to in Homes for All will be delivered through the planning system, and will therefore be subject to both Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in line with the SEA Directive and Environmental Impact Assessment. In addition, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has awarded a major research contract as part of our response to the Barker review to consider the economic, social, environmental and fiscal implications of additional housebuilding. The contract runs to June 2005, and has been awarded to a consortium led by Entec UK Ltd.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is, in accordance with PPG25 on flood risk, encouraging planning authorities to undertake Strategic Flood Risk Assessments to support development planning in the growth areas. New growth areas will be identified to make best use of existing and committed infrastructure, including flood defences required to protect existing historic settlements.

Housing

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes have been constructed in Romford, Essex in each of the last five years. [213745]

Keith Hill: Figures for Romford are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The annual numbers of new build completions reported for the London borough of Havering since 1999–2000 are tabled as follows:

	Completions
1999–2000	284
2000–01	274
2001–02	307
2002–03	263
2003–04	289

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new homes have been built in rural areas in each year since 1997. [213134]

Keith Hill: The annual numbers of new-build completions since 1997–98 for English local authorities defined as rural by the Countryside Agency are in the following table.

	Completions
1997–98	55,400
1998–99	49,900
1999–2000	53,300
2000–01	48,700
2001–02	47,500
2002–03	49,100
2003–04	46,800

The complete list of the local authorities classified as rural is published in the Planning Statistics section of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website (under Urban and Rural Area definitions: Table Bl) http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=3331&l=2.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new houses have been built in each local authority area in Sussex in each of the last five years; and what percentage that represents of the new-build targets set by his Department. [214711]

Keith Hill: The annual numbers of new build completions reported for each of authorities in East and West Sussex since 1999–2000 are in the following table. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not set new-build targets. Information on current planned housing provision is available in the county structure plans of West Sussex and East Sussex.

Numbers of new-build completions

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Adur	119	67	30	22	52
Arun	387	293	484	587	394
Brighton and Hove	539	330	572	117	150
Chichester	224	307	337	453	371
Crawley	175	63	39	67	74
Eastbourne	328	397	498	437	572
Hastings	183	339	218	284	91
Horsham	621	492	356	671	514
Lewes	81	111	152	148	139
Mid-Sussex	172	170	128	182	486
Rother	159	146	335	201	172
Wealden	511	279	191	314	173
Worthing	88	195	62	218	119

Source:
Returns (P2) to ODPM on building control completions.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money Sefton received in 2004–05 for repair and refurbishment of council homes; and how much is proposed for 2005–06. [214592]

Keith Hill: The following table shows Sefton's maintenance and major repairs allowances per dwelling within Housing Revenue Account subsidy for 2004–05 and 2005–06. The final volume of these allowances will depend on changes in the size of Sefton's stock.

Sefton: allowances per dwelling within HRA subsidy

	2004–05	*2005–06*
Maintenance allowance	730.72	837.32
Major repairs allowance	563.21	581.12

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people owned their own homes in Crosby in each year since 1997. [214685]

Keith Hill: Results from the last Census show that in 2001 there were 24,017 households in the parliamentary constituency of Crosby who were owner occupiers—out of a total of 29,484 households.

Of these owner-occupiers 11,089 owned their home outright: 12,825 were buying with a mortgage: and 103 were in shared ownership schemes.

Annual figures from 1997 are not available.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the level of Sefton's housing debt was for each year since 1997. [214686]

Keith Hill: The estimated share of Sefton's debt attributed to housing is tabled as follows. The estimate is used for the calculation of the Council's Housing Revenue Account Subsidy:

	£
2005–06	77,462,965
2004–05	75,382,599
2003–04	72,673,989
2002–03	73,788,424
2001–02	75,262,035
2000–01	74,963,929
1999–2000	73,288,544
1998–99	73,865,594
1997–98	74,616,833

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which recommendations of the Barker review of housing supply the Government intend to implement; and if he will make a statement. [211163]

Keith Hill: The Government's initial response to Kate Barker's report was provided by my right hon. Friends the Chancellor and the Deputy Prime Minister alongside the budget on 17 March 2004. We said then that we intend to bring forward a package of measures to address the recommendations of the Barker review by the end of 2005.

Kate Barker's proposals build on the approach adopted in the Communities Plan, launched by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister in February 2003. Her analysis has reinforced our case and strategy for more growth. In particular, the Government have accepted Kate Barker's central recommendation that there should be a step change in housing supply and intends to set a national market affordability goal, by the end of 2005, as part of the package of measures in response to the Barker Review.

In advance of the wider package, and in response to one of Kate Barker's recommendations, the Government recently consulted on proposals to strengthen regional integration by bringing together regional planning bodies and regional housing boards and to provide the merged bodies with independent advice. Following that consultation, we will be announcing decisions shortly.

In the 2004 Spending Review, we made a start on infrastructure investment in creating a Community Infrastructure Fund, as recommended by Kate Barker. An extra £50 million in 2006–07 and £150 million in 2007–08 will be available to finance transport projects needed to sustain housing growth. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor also allocated funds which, with additional Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding, aims to provide an extra 10,000 new homes for social let annually, together with resources that will help deliver the 200,000 new homes identified in the Sustainable Communities Plan in Thames Gateway and the other growth areas by 2016 and go further by responding to new proposals for growth.

Licensing Hours

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what requirements there are on local councillors to declare an interest when considering applications for the extension of licensing hours. [214029]

Mr. Raynsford: Under the terms of the Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) (England) Order 2001, members of local authorities with a personal interest in a matter under discussion at any meeting of the authority must disclose to the meeting the existence and nature of that interest.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures his Department plans to introduce training for local authority councillors who will sit on the new licensing boards that will grant extension to licensing hours. [214030]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no such plans. The Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS)—a central body created by the UK local authority associations including the Welsh Local Government Association and funded by top-sliced revenue support grant—is providing advice, guidance, and developing training courses for councils' officers and members on the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 (Part 2).

Local Elections

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 758W, on local elections, what estimate he has made of the cost of implementing the suggestion of the Electoral Commission to introduce freepost mailings in local elections; and if he will make a statement. [211192]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has to date made no estimate of the cost of the Electoral Commission's recommendation. Local elections in Scotland, apart from the franchise, are a matter for the Scottish Office.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what freedoms councils with a *(a)* good and *(b)* excellent comprehensive performance assessment result have gained; and how long those freedoms last. [211917]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government announced in November 2002 a package of freedoms and flexibilities for local authorities which would be granted following Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). All authorities have gained new powers to borrow and to charge for discretionary services, and the freedom to spend surplus street parking income on environmental improvements. We have also given them powers to establish Business Improvement Districts and to vary council tax discounts.

In addition authorities with an excellent, good or fair CPA assessment have been given the power to trade in function-related activities. As set out in our response on 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 650–51W, to the hon. Member's recent question about plans, we have also relaxed plan requirements for good and excellent authorities.

In addition, good councils have significantly reduced inspection and excellent councils receive virtually no inspection. Excellent authorities are not subject to ring-fenced funding apart from that passed direct to schools. Excellent authorities are also able to join the Innovation Forum to explore new ways of working to enable local government to better meet local needs.

Councils retain CPA based freedoms provided they retain their CPA results. Councils that lose good or excellent status are able to retain freedoms contingent on CPA categorisations for at least a year, although we would consider removing them in cases of serious failure.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on plans *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the Audit Commission have to extend Comprehensive Performance Assessment to (i) the fire service and (ii) police authorities. [211938]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government have invited the Audit Commission to take on the role of performance assessment for the Fire and Rescue Service in England. The Audit Commission is currently implementing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) across the 46 English Fire and Rescue Authorities and will publish the results by August 2005. London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority has already been assessed as part of the Greater London Authority's Initial Performance Assessment.

Neither the Government nor the Audit Commission have any specific plans at present to extend the CPA to Police Authorities. However, the recently published Police Reform White Paper, Building Communities, Beating Crime, suggests a package of measures intended to clarify and strengthen new accountability arrangements for policing. These propose that police authorities, for the first time, be subject to inspection and intervention. The detail of this will be worked though in conjunction with stakeholders.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the regulatory impact assessment produced for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment regime. [211977]

Mr. Raynsford: Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was introduced in 2002. Prior to April 2004, no regulatory impact assessment was required for any proposal that impacted solely on public services, and it was determined at the time that the CPA proposals met this criteria.

The Audit Commission are currently consulting on proposals for Comprehensive Performance Assessment from 2005. These proposals include a reduction, by 2006–07, of 68 per cent. in the volume of inspection required to support CPA, compared to the 2002–03 level. A regulatory impact assessment has not been provided with this consultation because current guidelines only demand one for public sector proposals that impose an additional burden of over £5 million per annum.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1978W, on local government finance, for which grants Torbay unitary authority may apply; for which grants Torbay unitary authority has applied; and for which grants applications were successful. [213504]

Mr. Raynsford: The following table lists all grants allocated to Torbay unitary authority in 2004–05 within aggregate external finance (AEF) in addition to revenue support grant and national non-domestic rates. These were the grants referred to in the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 198W. There are other grants outside AEF but these are not provided for an authority's core services and relate, in the main, to areas of funding which are passed on by local authorities, such as mandatory student awards. For the most part, the authority was entitled to these grants and did not in 2004–05 need to apply in order to receive an allocation.

Torbay

£ million

Grant	*Amount*
Standards Fund	2.809
Teachers' Pay Reform	1.855
Sure Start General Grant	1.670
Leadership Incentive	0.364
Transitional Support	0.182
School Standards	2.007
Safeguarding Children	0.230
Carers Grant	0.372
Training Support	0.161
National Training Strategy	0.083
Preserved Rights	[illegible].480
Adoption Support and Special Guardianship	0.059
Choice Protects	0.077
Human Resources Development Strategy	0.063
Access and Systems Capacity	1.542
Children and Adolescent Mental Health	0.155
Residential Allowance	1.793
Teenage Pregnancy Local Implementation	0.101
Mental Health	0.342
AIDS Support	0.018
Delayed Discharge	0.337
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit administration[1]	1.160
Performance Standards[2]	0.266
Civil Defence	0.067
Waste Targeted Grant	0.057
Probation Loan Charges	0.060
Neighbourhood Wardens	0.034
Planning Delivery	0.510
Supporting People	6.130
Supporting People Administration	0.155
Magistrates Courts	0.854

Torbay

£ million

Grant	*Amount*
Rural Bus Subsidy	0.015
Homelessness Strategies[3]	0.060
Private Finance Initiative	1.800

[1] Authorities need to submit management information to receive the correct amounts of housing benefits and council tax benefits administration.

[2] The amount for the HB/CTB Performance Standards is an amount that the local authority has applied for and has been awarded. Payment is dependent on payment progressing.

[3] Part of grant involves a bid and payment is dependent on key homelessness indicators.

Some grants are also provided on the basis of eligibility (such as some Standards Fund initiatives where schools might receive support as a result of being designated for a particular role, or in the case of the Teacher Pay Reform Grants where grant is paid on the basis of information held about teacher numbers and salaries).

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the transition phase, following the introduction of the new formula grant system in 2003–04 will end; and if he will make a statement. [214839]

Mr. Raynsford: I have made clear that the floor damping mechanism is an integral part of the new formula grant system introduced in 2003–04. This ensures that all authorities receive an increase in formula grant at least equal to the floor.

The floor damping mechanism protects authorities from both changes in the underlying formula and from changes in the socio-economic data used in the formula grant calculations. We have no intention of removing this protection.

Local Government Ombudsman

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of the staff employed in investigations on behalf of the Local Government Ombudsman previously worked in local government; [211461]

(2) whether the procedures for appointment of the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) have been altered since the last occasion on which a LGO was appointed. [211462]

Mr. Raynsford: Information on the proportion of the investigations staff of the Local Government Ombudsman who previously worked in local government is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Although the Local Government Ombudsman service falls outside the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA), new appointments will continue to be conducted in accordance with OCPA's guidance—as they were in 2001 when the last appointment was made.

Local Government Pensions

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many representations he has received expressing concerns about the proposed changes to the local government pension scheme; and if he will make a statement. [213945]

Phil Hope: The Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment)(No 2) Regulations 2004 were laid before the House on 22 December 2004 and come into force on 1 April 2005. Amending regulations were the subject of a statutory consultation exercise between 31 March and 30 June 2004. Some 290 responses expressing concerns were received from that exercise and, of those, 220 involved correspondence from hon. Members on behalf of their constituents. Subsequently, around 5,000 items of additional correspondence have been received, representing 0.3 per cent. of the 1.5 million current active Scheme membership. Since the end of the consultation exercise, a further 530 items of correspondence have been received from hon. Members, enclosing a variety of trades union campaign letters and leaflets.

Meden Valley

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what legal opinion has been sought by English Partnerships in relation to compulsory purchase of properties in the Meden Valley; [213730]

(2) how many repairs orders due to public safety have been issued through the Meden Valley Partnership; [213731]

(3) how many residents have neither requested to move nor opposed compulsory purchase of their home under the Meden Valley Partnership; and how many of these are over 80 years old; [213732]

(4) how many residents of the Royal Estate and Warsop Vale have indicated a wish to remain living in their area under the Meden Valley partnership; [213733]

(5) what meetings have taken place between the Meden Valley partnership and the police about drug dealing and antisocial behaviour in the last two years; [213734]

(6) how many letters of thanks have been received by the Meden Valley partnership from local residents since its inception; [213735]

(7) when English Partnerships expects to build new houses in Warsop as part of the Meden Valley partnership; [213736]

(8) what plans English Partnerships has to meet its commitment to involve residents in the management of housing regeneration projects in Warsop; [213737]

(9) when and under what authority English Partnerships required means testing for existing tenants to buy new homes in Warsop under the Meden Valley partnership; [213738]

(10) how much public money has been spent through the Meden Valley partnership; [213739]

(11) how many homes have been refurbished under the Meden Valley partnership; [213740]

(12) when an employee of the East Midland Development Agency last entered *(a)* a house and *(b)* an area under threat of compulsory purchase from the Meden Valley partnership; [213750]

(13) when an employee of English Partnerships last entered *(a)* a house and *(b)* an area under threat of compulsory purchase from the Meden Valley partnership. [213751]

Keith Hill: I will write to my hon. Friend in due course.

Midlands Way

Mr. Todd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the framework is for consultation on the Midlands Way; and if he will make a statement. [213866]

Keith Hill: The consultation paper SMART Growth: The Midlands Way was launched on 1 February at the Delivering Sustainable Communities Summit in Manchester by the two Midlands Regional Development Agencies. Details can be obtained from the East Midlands Development Agency or Advantage West Midlands websites at www.emda.org.uk and www.advantagewm.co.uk.

Millennium Dome

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total public expenditure on the Millennium Dome was in each year from 1997–98, broken down by *(a)* cost centre and *(b)* department. [211164]

Keith Hill: Expenditure of taxpayers money on the Dome, by English Partnerships, in the years requested, was as follows:

	£
1997–98	0
1998–99	73,000
1999–2000	1.402 million
2000–01	5.225 million
2001–02	10.845 million
2002–03	7.245 million
2003–04	4.157 million
2004–05	[1]2.228 million

[1] To end of November 2004

This was expenditure on:

the decommissioning of the Dome;

the sale process which concluded in June 2004 when the commercial transaction between English Partnerships and Meridian Delta Ltd. and Anschutz Entertainment Group went unconditional;

the costs of management, maintenance, security and insurance of the Dome, including English Partnerships staff costs.

Moving Out of London Scheme

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many tenants who left London under the Moving Out of London scheme have since returned to London. [213067]

Keith Hill: The number of tenants who left London under the LAWN (moving out of London) scheme is shown in the table.

Calendar year	*Transfers out*	*Number of returnees*[1]	*Percentage returnees*[1]
2004–05	[2]347	[2]17	4.9
2003–04	519	26	5.0
2002–03	469	23	4.9
2001–02	312	16	5.1
Pre April 2001	56	3	5.4
Total	1,703	85	5.0

[1] Information regarding returnees is reliant solely on feedback received from landlords and occasionally from movers who expressed an interest in a move back to London and contacted LAWN for advice.

[2] To date.

Parliamentary Boundaries (Wales)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has received the report from the Boundary Commission for Wales on the proposed new parliamentary boundaries in Wales; when he will lay the Order implementing the changes; and if he will deposit a copy of the report in the Library. [214413]

Mr. Raynsford: A copy of the Boundary Commission for Wales' report was presented to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 31 January 2005. Under the Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986 we are required to lay the report before Parliament, together with a draft of an order in Council giving effect to the Commission's recommendations, with or without modifications, as soon as may be. Copies of the Commission's report will be made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what dates he has planned for implementing the recommendations of the Boundary Commission in Wales. [214526]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received the Report of the Welsh Parliamentary Boundary Commission on Monday 31 January. By statute, we are obliged to lay this report before Parliament, together with a draft Order in Council giving effect to the new constituencies, as soon as may be after receiving it, and if Parliament approves the draft, to submit that draft to Her Majesty in Council. Subsequently the Order will be made and come into force immediately thereafter or at such later date as may be provided for in the Order.

Repossessions (Durham)

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many repossessions by building societies and other providers of mortgages in the City of Durham there were in each of the last four years. [214359]

Keith Hill: Figures for the total number of properties taken into possession by mortgage lenders are published half-yearly by the Council of Mortgage Lenders. These figures do not contain a district or regional breakdown. The most recent statistics published indicate that the number of properties taken into possession in the second half of 2004 was the lowest since 1982.

Right to Buy

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will update the affordability index used to determine the areas included within the scope of the Housing (Right-to-Buy) (Limits on Discounts) (Amendments) Order 2003 (Statutory Instrument 2003 No. 498). [214490]

Keith Hill: The Housing (Right-to-Buy) (Limits on Discount) (Amendment) Order 2003 came into force on 27 March 2003. It reduced to £16,000 the maximum Right-to-Buy discount available to tenants in 41 areas in London and the South of England that appeared to be under the greatest housing market pressure in terms of high levels of homelessness and high property prices. The Government are keeping the position on maximum discounts generally under review.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role is fulfilled by the third special adviser in his Department. [210485]

Yvette Cooper: Special advisers in this Department are appointed under the terms and conditions set out in the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Standard Spending Assessments

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the standard spending assessment per capita is for each of the English regions in 2004–05. [213149]

Mr. Raynsford: Formula Spending Share per head for each English region is in the following table:

Local authority	*2004–05 Formula Spending Shares (£ million)*	*Mid-2002 population estimates*	*2004–05 Formula Spending Shares per head (£ per head)*
South West	5,363.112	4,961,277	1.080.99
South East	8.814.046	8,038,386	1.096.49
London	11.153.992	7,355,354	1,516.45
Eastern	6.090.967	5,420,360	1.123.72
East Midlands	4,741.697	4,215,492	1.124.83
West Midlands	6,530.525	5,304,124	1,231.22
Yorkshire and Humberside	6,075.435	4,982,503	1,219.35
North East	3,213.502	2,513,274	1,278.61
North West	8,592.046	6,770,981	1,268.95

Thames Gateway

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the additional floor space required to accommodate the new jobs that the Government plan to realise in the Thames Gateway between 2003 and 2016 has received planning permission. [214524]

Keith Hill: Data are not held centrally about the amount of floor space expected to be provided by new developments for which planning permission has been granted by local authorities.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does hold data on the total amount of existing commercial and industrial floor space. Across local authority districts in the Thames Gateway, this figure was 24.8 million m^2 in 2004.

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of the planned new dwellings in the Thames Gateway for construction between 2003 and 2016 have received planning permission. [214525]

Keith Hill: Data on the number of dwellings within planning permissions granted by local authorities are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Housing delivery is, however, monitored by returns on housing completions from local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and to the Regional Planning Bodies.

Traveller Sites

Mrs. Spelman: what helpline services the Government provide to travellers; and how much was spent on such services in the last period for which figures are available. [211924]

Yvette Cooper *[pursuant to the reply, 31 January 2005, Official Report, c. 655W]*: I regret that incorrect information was provided. The correct information is set out as follows:

> The Legal Services Commission is a non-departmental public body, funded by the Department of Constitutional Affairs and responsible for providing civil legal aid in England and Wales. The commission provides funding to the Community Law Partnership, a legal practice based in Birmingham, in order to provide a national helpline for Gypsies and Travellers. The Legal Services Commission advise that this service costs around £50,000 a year. One of the objectives of the commission is to help those who are socially excluded. Travellers fall within this group.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A-level Courses

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Government of the Republic of Ireland regarding the implications of the recent Trinity College Dublin decision to place a cap on the maximum number of students taking certain courses who come through the Northern Ireland and UK A-Level entry system. [214807]

Mr. Gardiner: There have been no discussions with the Government of the Republic of Ireland on this issue. My officials have had discussions with Trinity College Dublin about the changes to their entry requirements and the effects these might have on Northern Ireland domiciled students.

Ceasefire (Police Numbers)

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of police officers that would be required in the Province if there were to be *(a)* a full-scale return to terrorism by republican and so-called loyalist terrorist organisations, *(b)* general observance of a ceasefire by republican and so-called loyalist terrorists but widespread criminality and *(c)* a total cessation of terrorist and criminal activities by all terrorist organisations. [214226]

Mr. Pearson: The report of the Independent Commission on Policing, released in September 1999, recommended that the security situation prevailing at that time required the police service to employ 7,500 regular officers.

This was accepted by the Government and the police service. The current established strength of the PSNI is 7,500 regular officers. They continue to be supported by full-time reserve officers. The chief constable recently decided to reduce the number of such officers to 680 by 2007–08. He believes that this level of resource, combined with 7,500 regular officers, will be sufficient for him to deliver an effective policing service to the people of Northern Ireland in the current environment.

A decision on how large the Police Service of Northern Ireland would need to be to cater for an improved or worsened security and policing environment would be based on operational assessment, and subject to consideration by the chief constable, Government and the Policing Board.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies, for each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211594]

Mr. Pearson: The total cost for early retirement costs are published within the Northern Ireland Office Resource Accounts 2003–04, a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

To separate out the enhanced part of early retirement costs could be achieved only at disproportionate cost.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211667]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The following table provides figures for the Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs):

	Cost (£)
1996–97	309,000
2003–04	2,806,403
2004–05[1]	1,746,049

[1] 2004–05 actuals are only available to December 2004. The estimated figure, for the financial year 2004–05, is based on the actual spend to December 2004.

Notes:

1. PFI costs relating to a major computer system (Causeway Programme) within the department are not included in 2003–04 and 2004–05.

2. The increases from 1996–97 to 2003–04 and 2004–05 can be mainly explained by expenditure on consultants in the following areas which were not applicable in 1996–97:

the introduction of the findings of the Criminal Justice Review resulting in expenditure on consultancy by the Public Prosecution Service;

review of the Electoral System in NI; and

Bloody Sunday Inquiry IT consultancy costs.

3. For the financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08, budgets have not yet been allocated to a level of detail to allow us to provide consultancy cost estimates for these years.

DEL Guidelines (Whistle-blowing)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines the Department of Employment and Learning has issued to universities on dealing with cases of whistle-blowing. [214726]

Mr. Gardiner: The Department for Employment and Learning has not directly issued any guidelines to the universities on whistle-blowing. A "Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK" issued in November 2004 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England on behalf of the Committee of University Chairmen (CUC) includes guidance specifically on whistle-blowing. The three Higher Education Funding Councils in Great Britain and the Department all contributed to the preparation of the CUC Guide.

New Deal (Disabled People)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have benefited from the New Deal for people with disabilities. [214576]

Mr. Gardiner: From its introduction in 1999 to the end of 2004, 5408 people registered to enter the programme and 1,832 entered employment.

Paid Informers

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes have taken place in the use by special branch of paid informers within republican and so-called loyalist terrorist organisations since the implementation of the Patten report. [214225]

Mr. Pearson: The PSNI, like all UK police services, manages covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) under procedures laid down by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. The use of all intelligence sources is also managed within the guidelines of the UK National Intelligence Model (NIM).

Both the Act and NIM were introduced after the Patten report. The lead responsibility for management of this activity lies with the PSNI Crime Operations Department.

Primary School Enrolment (Lisburn)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* actual and *(b)* maximum total enrolment figures are for all primary schools within the Lisburn city council area. [214577]

Mr. Gardiner: In 2004–05, the figure for total actual enrolments at primary schools within the Lisburn city council area is 9,914 pupils. The overall approved enrolment total was 13,590 pupils.

School reference	*School name*	*Enrolment number*	
		Approved	*Actual*
4010512	McKinney Primary School	145	125
4010720	Ballycarrickmaddy Primary School	203	162
4010743	Largymore Primary School	412	168
4010762	Brownlee Primary School	179	142
4010788	Dunmurry Primary School	262	148
4010807	Lisburn Central Primary School	335	230

School reference	School name	Enrolment number	
		Approved	Actual
4010882	Seymour Hill Primary School	291	203
4010885	Tonagh Primary School	228	158
4011508	Charley Memorial Primary School	76	20
4011584	Carr Primary School	100	86
4011608	Anahilt Primary School	300	238
4011619	Dromara Primary School	152	128
4011627	Lambeg Primary School	76	20
4011633	Hillsborough Primary School	397	386
4011648	Hillhall Primary School	51	52
4011686	Drumbo Primary School	100	19
4013039	Newport Primary School	145	41
4013305	Harmony Hill Primary School	729	634
4013308	Fort Hill Primary School	240	205
4013309	Derriaghy Primary School	125	53
4013334	Knockmore Primary School	212	171
4016104	Moira Primary School	382	383
4016144	Old Warren Primary School	305	111
4016145	Killowen Primary School	420	358
4016202	Lower Ballinderry Primary School	193	170
4016401	Pond Park Primary School	598	585
4016417	Maghaberry Primary School	227	218
4016441	Ballymacash Primary School	334	327
4016615	Riverdale Primary School	203	190
4016636	Meadow Bridge Primary School	290	247
4030573	Ballymacward Primary School	145	105
4030823	Ballymacrickett Primary School	261	257
4030897	St. Joseph's Primary School	395	223
4031693	St. Colman's Primary School	87	29
4033306	St. Aloysius Primary School	490	259
4033307	St. Colman's Primary School	436	332
4036081	St. Luke's Primary School	665	255
4036134	St. Mark's Primary School	611	533
4036285	The Good Shepherd Primary School	823	413
4036480	St. Kieran's Primary School	725	501
4036591	Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School	348	235
4036618	Christ the Redeemer Primary School	410	400
4046600	Scoil Na Fuiseoige	155	137
4050618	Hilden Integrated Primary School	126	67
4066611	Oakwood Integrated Primary School	203	190

Departmental Advertising

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211668]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The following table provides figures for the Northern Ireland Office (excluding agencies and NDPBs). The figures provided are totals for both advertising and publicity as the Northern Ireland Office does not record these types of expenditure separately.

	Total expenditure (£)
1996–97	480,160
1997–98	616,752
2003–04	460,101
2004–05 (Estimate)	600,960

In 2004–05, a one-off expense of £300,000 was made to cover the cost of the Government leafleting campaign "What to do in the Event of a Public Emergency".

For the financial years 2005–06 to 2007–08, budgets have not yet been allocated to a level of detail which would allow us to provide advertising and publicity cost estimates for these years.

School Performance Tables

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will reintroduce school performance tables in the Province. [213093]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington) on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1003W.

Stevens Inquiry

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost of the Stevens Inquiry into allegations of collusion has been since it was first established. [214578]

Mr. Pearson: Sir John Stevens' report is to the Chief Constable. The Stevens investigation has thus far been funded by the PSNI and is therefore a matter for the Chief Constable.

I have asked the PSNI to provide the hon. Gentleman with the information requested.

TV Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been fined in Northern Ireland for not possessing a television licence in 2004, broken down by parliamentary constituency or postcode. [213976]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not available.

CABINET OFFICE

Local Authorities (Emergency Response Obligations)

Andrew George: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what level of *(a)* central Government grant and *(b)* financial support has been made available to each local authority to meet its statutory (i) civil contingencies, (ii) emergency planning and (iii) other emergency response obligations not otherwise catered for in the domestic budgets for the emergency services. [214218]

Mr. Miliband: The Government's contribution to the cost of English local authorities' civil protection activities will be £38.437 million in 2005–06. This funding will be paid through the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services block of the mainstream Revenue Support Grant, which is distributed to individual local authorities according to a broadly population-based formula. I have today placed a table in the Library exemplifying the consequences for the formula spending share of each local authority in England of this funding level.

Lone Parents

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on cross-departmental co-ordination of policies for lone parents. [212262]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

Government policy on child care is taken forward by the inter-departmental Sure Start Unit, reflecting the cross-cutting role that child care plays in a number of Government objectives: helping parents into employment, supporting child development and in tackling child poverty.

Helping lone parents into work is a key aspect of the child poverty agenda. The Child Poverty Review, published alongside the 2004 Spending Review, worked across Government to identify next steps both in relation to helping parents into work and on key public services such as housing, education and transport, to help poor families and improve the life chances of poor children.

Lyons Review

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will make a statement on progress in implementing the Lyons review. [213471]

Mr. Boateng: I have been asked to reply.

As reported in the pre-Budget report in December 2004, around 4,000 posts will have been relocated out of London and the South East by the end of 2004–05. Further progress will be announced in Budget 2005.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what role she will play in the sale of BBC Broadcast. [211912]

Estelle Morris: Any sale of BBC Broadcast will require the approval of the Secretary of State by virtue of a condition attached when its incorporation was approved in 2002. No application for such approval has been made.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether competent companies will be allowed access to BBC Broadcast's essential financial information in order to determine whether to make a bid for the company; and if she will make a statement. [211913]

Estelle Morris: I understand that the BBC plan to begin the formal sale process with a public advertisement by early March and will make increasing levels of commercial and financial information available to bidders as the sale process progresses.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to publish the Green Paper on the BBC Charter renewal; and if she will make a statement. [213246]

Tessa Jowell: The BBC Charter Review Green Paper will be published shortly.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213624]

Mr. Caborn: The provision of canteen facilities, in the one staff canteen in the Department, is outsourced. Until 2001 the Department did not offer staff canteen facilities. As a new venture with no trading record the contract was an outsourced 'cost plus' contract costing as follows:

	£
2001–02	[1]104,432
2002–03	91,340
2003–04	67,431

[1] Including set-up costs.

A new contractor won the contract as from October 2004 on a fixed price basis, the annual cost of the new contract should not exceed £53,000.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements and *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206461]

Mr. Caborn: The Department incurred the following costs in relation to actual or potential litigation each financial year since 1997.

Financial year	*Total cost (£)*	*Number of files worked on by the Treasury Solicitor's Department*
1997–98	199,939.10	8
1998–99	657,153.11	20
1999–2000	25,075.46	15
2000–01	36,943.57	12
2001–02	72,858.21	15
2002–03	198,092.75	29
2003–04	122,799.77	22
2004–05	146,997.05	17

The column headed "Total cost" shows the total annual cost to the Department of legal services relating to litigation in courts and tribunals (including services which did not result in the issue of proceedings).

The Treasury Solicitor's Department's charges for services relating to litigation (which form by far the greatest part of the annual total) include the cost of *(a)* litigation lawyers (including solicitors and counsel) and other staff, *(b)* services and disbursements not attributable to the cost of lawyers (such as court fees) and *(c)* for the years up to 2001–02, costs and damages paid to other parties in litigation by the Department. After 2001–02, costs and damages paid to other parties in litigation come out of the Department's Treasury Solicitor's budget and such information could be provided only at a disproportionate cost

The column headed "Number of files worked on by the Treasury Solicitor's Department" shows the number of "files" worked on by the Treasury Solicitor's

Department in each year. On receipt of instructions from the Department, a "file" is opened by the Treasury Solicitor's Department to provide a reference for billing purposes. Such a "file" will usually correspond with a court case (or action), but this is not always so. For example, a number of cases may be dealt with under one "file" reference; or there may be a "file" for a claim which is resolved before the issue of court proceedings. Many of the "files" will have been worked on in more than one year. If so, the "file" is included in each of the relevant years.

A breakdown of this information to give details of the number of cases, how many of these were settled or proceeded to a full hearing, and the legal costs of each case on an annual basis could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Department's own lawyers assist in the conduct of litigation on behalf of the Department but the costs to the Department of their services are not included in this answer because it is not possible to separate these costs from the total costs of the services they provide.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213641]

Mr. Caborn: The figures for DCMS expenditure on in-house magazines in the years since 1997 are as follows:

	£
1997–98	0
1998–99	0
1999–2000	0
2000–01	0
2001–02	0
2002–03	10,770.85
2003–04	10,231.26
2004–05	[1]4,851.58

[1] To date

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213802]

Mr. Caborn: Nine parking spaces are available and included in the lease cost of two of the Department's buildings. One additional space is provided at a third building at a cost of £2,500 per annum. Parking tickets and penalties are the responsibility of the individual concerned.

Digital Television

Syd Rapson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to ensure that people living in multiple dwelling units have access to digital television after switchover. [214547]

Estelle Morris: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey (Mr. Wyatt) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 784W.

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that digital television reception will be available to occupants of multiple dwelling units via *(a)* satellite and *(b)* digital terrestrial television through communal aerial systems; and if she will make a statement. [214191]

Estelle Morris: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey (Mr. Wyatt) on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 784W.

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when she received a copy of the Association of British Bookmakers report on fixed odds betting terminals; and what assessment her Department has made of its findings; [214186]

(2) what conclusions her Department has reached on the impact of high stake slot machines, with particular reference to fixed odds betting terminals, on problem gambling; [214187]

(3) what assessment she has made of evidence from Gamcare on the effect of fixed odds betting terminals on the Gamcare helpline for problem gamblers; and whether she is re-examining the voluntary code drawn up with bookmakers in the light of that evidence. [214188]

Mr. Caborn: The research commissioned by Association of British Bookmakers (ABB) on fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs) was shared with Government in November 2004. I sent a summary of the report to all members of Standing Committee B on the Gambling Bill on 6 January 2005.

DCMS has commissioned a peer review of the ABB's research and will make the results of this review available shortly.

No policy decisions will be made on the basis of a single piece of research.

High stake slot machines, including FOBTs, remain on probation and we will continue to adopt a cautious approach. Government will not hesitate to act should there be sound evidence of harm.

I understand that Gamcare is in the process of compiling its Care Services report, which will include information on helpline calls regarding fixed odds betting terminals. I await the publication of this report with interest.

Goodison Review

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with the Treasury about implementing the recommendations of the Goodison review. [213935]

Estelle Morris: The Department's discussions with the Treasury are reflected in the Spending Review 2004 announcements that:

> annual funding for the National Heritage Memorial Fund will double by 2007–08, compared to 2004–05;
>
> the Renaissance in the Regions programme for regional museums will be extended to all nine English regions; and

the free access commitment, which currently covers the main national museums and galleries, and the VAT refund scheme that helps deliver free access, will be extended to university museums and galleries.

The two Departments also discussed our plans for the transfer of functions between DCMS and MLA: these are now well under way.

Iraq

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her recent discussions with the Iraqi Minister of Culture on *(a)* Babylon and *(b)* Itatra. [211697]

Tessa Jowell: I spoke to the Iraqi Culture Minister on 26 January about the damage done to the site of Babylon. I expressed my sympathy and was able to outline the assistance that the UK is able to provide. My Department will be providing funding for three interns to come to the UK to learn the skills that will be necessary in the reconstruction and management of the Babylon site. I will be writing to the Minister shortly confirming that offer of assistance.

I have not spoken to the Minister directly on the subject of Hatra. However, I will raise this issue in my letter to him.

Liquor Licences (Essex)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many liquor licences were revoked from *(a)* public houses, *(b)* wine bars and *(c)* nightclubs in (i) Southend-on-Sea and (ii) Essex in each year since 1997. [213727]

Mr. Caborn: We do not have the breakdown of figures in the categories requested, but we can provide figures for all premises with justices' on-licences which include public houses, nightclubs and wine bars.

We do not collate numbers of nightclubs specifically. However under the Licensing Act 1964, a special hours certificate is required to permit the sale and consumption of alcohol during specified times on particular days outside the permitted hours up to 2.00 am, and 3.00 am in the West End of London. These certificates apply to on-licensed premises and registered clubs which have a music and dancing licence and provide substantial refreshment. We can supply the figures for the number of special hours certificates refused, but not the number of special hours certificates revoked.

Statistics on the number of justices' on-licence revocations in England and Wales are collected on a triennial basis. The figures for years 1995, 1998, 2001 were collated by the Home Office and we unable to break these down by county (see table 1 which shows the total numbers of justices' on-licence revocations and the number of special hours certificates refused in England and Wales).

The figures for justices' on-licences revoked in Essex and the number of special hours certificates refused in 2004 are shown, as well as the number of justices' on-licences revoked in South East Essex (see table 2). Figures are for the year to 30 June.

Table 1

Year to 30 June	*Total of justices' on-licences revoked*	*Total number of special hours certificates refused*
1995	262	211
1998	215	146
2001	132	301

Table 2: Year to 30 June 2004

	Number
Total number of justices' on-licences revoked in:	
Essex	11
South East Essex	4
Total number of special hours certificates refused in:	
Essex	4
South East Essex	1

Lottery Funds

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on her policy on ring-fencing lottery funds for children's play. [213889]

Tessa Jowell: We have made clear our commitment that the Big Lottery Fund will operate with much less Government intervention than its predecessor, the New Opportunities Fund. Within a framework of broad themes, outcomes and priorities agreed with Government, the Big Lottery Fund will be responsible for designing programmes, choosing delivery mechanisms, identifying partners and selecting projects. Like other lottery distributors, the fund will not have Government defined, ring-fenced programmes but will engage more with local communities and respond to their aspirations and needs. We expect funding for children's play projects to continue to come from across all lottery distributors, and to reach £200 million between 2006 and 2012.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the official residences for which her Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213564]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS does not have responsibility for any official residences.

Olympic Games 2012

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will press London 2012 to use the ground of Gloucester RFC for Olympic events if London's bid for the 2012 Games is successful. [213462]

Tessa Jowell: The Candidature File, submitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on 15 November 2004, contains detailed proposals for all sports venues that will be used in the event of London winning the right to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. The venues were selected using the technical guidelines provided by the IOC and have been agreed by the International Sports Federations.

Richard Ottaway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on compensation to businesses which would be displaced by a successful bid to host the 2012 Olympic games. [213521]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The London Development Agency (LDA) is responsible for assembling the land required to deliver the Olympic games in London in 2012. As part of this process of land assembly, the LDA is responsible for ensuring that any business that needs to be relocated receives compensation in line with the current legislation and is given the opportunity to relocate to an alternative site. The LDA has gone beyond its statutory obligations by making sure that each business has already received an offer making clear what compensation would be payable in the event that they need to be relocated. This compensation offer ensures that every business with a compensatable interest will receive the market value of their property interest and will also receive payments in respect of costs incurred in relocating their business, including any loss of profits directly attributable to the relocation. All of these payments will be made as though the property had been compulsorily acquired, even though no compulsory purchase order is currently in place and there is no obligation to offer compensation on this basis.

In addition, for the past twelve months, the LDA has been offering to meet the professional adviser costs reasonably incurred by businesses affected by London's Olympic bid.

Stonehenge

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who will bear the cost of *(a)* the Stonehenge visitor centre project, *(b)* the Countess roundabout A303(T) flyover and *(c)* the Stonehenge tunnel and Winterbourne Stoke bypass project. [214209]

Mr. Caborn: The cost of the Stonehenge visitor centre project will be borne by English Heritage from Exchequer funding and fund raising. The Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Trust have committed to contributing toward the cost of the project and DCMS contributed £3 million towards the purchase of the site. The A303 Stonehenge Improvement, which consists of the Countess Roundabout junction, the Stonehenge Tunnel and the Winterbourne bypass, will be from transport funds with a contribution from heritage funds.

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether it is her policy that the Stonehenge visitor centre project should proceed if the A303(T) tunnel project is *(a)* cancelled and *(b)* postponed. [214210]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are committed to improving the setting of Stonehenge and providing appropriate facilities for one of the United Kingdom's iconic historic sites. Removal of the roads around Stonehenge is a crucial element in these improvements.

Television Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people over the age of 75 in each of Northern Ireland's constituencies were entitled to free television licences at the latest date for which figures are available. [211875]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, 2001 Census data indicate that the approximate number of people aged 75 or over living in each constituency in Northern Ireland was as follows:

	Number
Belfast, East	7,474
Belfast, North	6,498
Belfast, South	6,488
Belfast, West	4,083
East Antrim	4,968
East Londonderry	5,014
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	5,723
Foyle	4,203
Lagan Valley	5,858
Mid Ulster	4,333
Newry and Armagh	5,229
North Antrim	6,492
North Down	7,301
South Antrim	4,891
South Down	5,798
Strangford	5,850
Upper Bann	5,590
West Tyrone	4,344

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people owning a television licence live in multiple dwelling units in *(a)* the private sector and *(b)* social housing. [214142]

Estelle Morris: The information requested is not available. The BBC have indicated that the data held by TV Licensing on licences in force do not distinguish between licensable addresses on the basis of whether or not they form part of a building in multiple occupation, nor—with the exception of applications for the Accommodation for Residential Care concessionary scheme—between private sector and social housing.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Blyth Valley are in receipt of free television licences. [214204]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Blyth Valley constituency in 2003–04 was 4,135, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many students have been fined for non-possession of a television licence since 2000. [213523]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* The information requested is not available as records are not kept of the occupation of those fined for television licence evasion.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arms Exports (West Africa)

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on arms sales to *(a)* Burkina Faso, *(b)* Benin, *(c)* Ghana, *(d)* Côte d'Ivoire, *(e)* Mali, *(f)* Niger and *(g)* Nigeria. [211952]

Mr. MacShane: The United Kingdom has one of the strictest and most transparent arms export licensing systems of any country. All export licence applications for all destinations are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time and other announced Government policies. The criteria clearly set out, among other considerations, our commitment to take account of the risk that exports might be diverted within the buyer country, re-exported under undesirable conditions, used for internal repression, external aggression or to abuse human rights and the risk of reverse engineering or unintended technology transfer.

Furthermore, for arms exports to the Côte d'Ivoire, the UK implements fully the arms embargo imposed by UN Security Council resolution 1572 of 15 November 2004, prohibiting the sale or supply of military equipment to Côte d'Ivoire, with certain specific exemptions.

For arms exports to Burkina Faso, Benin, Ghana, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, the Government also take full account of the Economic Community of West African States Moratorium declared on 1 November 1998 on the import, export and manufacture of light weapons.

Burkina Faso

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Government of Burkina Faso, *(b)* European Union counterparts and *(c)* members of the Economic Community of West African States regarding the forthcoming presidential elections in Burkina Faso. [211953]

Mr. Mullin: None.

Carbon Capture

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what matters in respect of bilateral UK-China co-operation on carbon capture and storage were discussed during his recent visit to China; and what programmes for scientific consideration on carbon sequestration have been established with countries in South and South East Asia. [212130]

Mr. MacShane: During his recent visit to China, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed in general terms G8 priorities, including Climate Change, with Premier Wen and Foreign Minister Li. In addition, discussions are ongoing with China on a possible Memorandum of Understanding for signature by the end of this year that may include scientific cooperation on carbon sequestration

No programmes specifically for scientific consideration on carbon sequestration have been established with countries in South and South East Asia. However, a UK-Philippines Memorandum of Understanding was signed by my right hon. Friend the then Minister for Energy and Construction (Mr. Wilson) and the Philippines Minister of Energy in early 2003 which includes collaboration on cleaner fossil fuel technologies and more efficient energy end-use technologies and techniques and may therefore cover issues related to carbon sequestration.

China

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the policy of the Chinese Government to repatriate refugees from North Korea; and if he will urge the Chinese Government to end this policy. [213112]

Mr. MacShane: We have concerns about the situation of North Korean asylum seekers in China. We have raised the matter on a number of occasions with the Chinese Government, most recently during the UK/China Human Rights Dialogue in Beijing on 22 November 2004. We continue to urge China to observe its obligations under the 1951 UN Convention on Religion and allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees access to the China/North Korea border region.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 8 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. Majid Ali. [212290]

Mr. MacShane: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) replied on 27 January.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 15 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Samiul Alam. [212291]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my right hon. Friend to the replies my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mullin) gave him on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1018W and on 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 523W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 7 December.

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 9 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to S. Hameed. [212293]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my right hon. Friend to the reply my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Mullin) gave him on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1019W. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary replied on 20 December.

Cuba

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Cuban authorities concerning *(a)* Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet and *(b)* Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez (Atúnez). [211958]

Mr. Rammell: We regularly raise human rights cases—including those of political prisoners Dr. Oscar Biscet and Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez (Atúnez)—with the Cuban authorities in London and in Havana. We have been monitoring their situation and health, and our embassy staff maintain close contacts with local human rights groups involved in their cases and with friends and family of the individuals. Dr. Biscet visited our embassy in November 2002 shortly before his arrest and the embassy continues to maintain regular contact with his wife, Elsa Morejon. The Government are aware of considerable public interest in the fate of all political prisoners in Cuba, including the two mentioned here. The case of Jorge Luis Garcia Pérez has also been raised both bilaterally and within the EU. The UK, along with EU partners, continues to urge the Cuban Government to release all political prisoners in Cuba.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on the maintenance of the EU's Common Position on Cuba. [211959]

Mr. Rammell: The EU's Common Position on Cuba, adopted in 1996, aims to promote a peaceful transition towards pluralist democracy in Cuba, with respect for human rights and an improvement of the living standards of the Cuban people. The Common Position sets out a policy of constructive engagement and dialogue with both the Cuban government and all sectors of civil society as the best way to achieve this goal. The Common Position is re-evaluated annually. The UK and all other member states are committed to maintaining the Common Position as the basis for the EU's policy towards Cuba. This was reaffirmed by the EU's General Affairs and External Relations Council on 31 January.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions *(a)* he and *(b)* his Ministers have had with the Spanish Government concerning the EU Common Position on Cuba. [211960]

Mr. Rammell: Both my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have kept in touch with our counterparts from Spain, and other member states, during the recent review of EU policy towards Cuba. This review culminated in the adoption of new Council Conclusions at the EU General Affairs and External Relations Council on 31 January 2005. The EU reaffirmed its commitment to the 1996 EU Common Position.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Cuban Government concerning section 3*(b)* of the EU's Common Position on Cuba. [211961]

Mr. Rammell: Promoting respect for human rights is fundamental to the UK's policy towards Cuba, as set out in the EU Common Position of 1996. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's 2004 Human Rights report contains a substantial section on Cuba and outlines more fully the work that the Government undertakes in this regard. The report can be accessed online at www.fco.gov.uk/humanrights.

Following the March 2003 crackdown on dissidents, I summoned the Cuban Ambassador in London to express the UK's dismay for the Cuban government's actions. In all subsequent meetings with the ambassador I have raised human rights concerns.

The UK will continue to use every opportunity to call for the release of all political prisoners and to urge the Cuban Government to apply greater respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, political reform and further economic liberalisation in Cuba.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213266]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), like all Government Departments, has to maintain a Departmental Unallocated Provision (DUP) which can be used to meet unanticipated events which could not have been foreseen at the time of the Spending Round. For the three years covered by the 2004 Spending Review the DUP is set at the following levels, as it steadily rises to the target of 2 per cent. of the FCO Core budget (i.e. excluding British Council and BBC World Service):

	£ million
2005–06	16
2006–07	19
2007–08	22

Environmental Treaties

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his Commonwealth counterparts on the policy of the US to specify non-adherence to international environmental treaties as a condition of bilateral trade agreements. [213251]

Mr. MacShane: We are not aware of any such policy on the part of the US Government and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers have therefore not discussed the issue with their Commonwealth counterparts.

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague to complete its work. [212015]

Mr. MacShane: The Completion Strategy of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has established deadlines for the completion of all investigations by end 2004, all trials by end 2008 and all appeals by end 2010.

The ICTY met the first deadline. Both the President and Prosecutor of ICTY have, however, alerted the Security Council to the risk of slippage in the later dates, in particular given the number of indictees that remain at large.

The United Kingdom takes every opportunity to encourage the ICTY to fulfil their mandate in the most effective and timely manner and will continue to press all countries to co-operate fully in the apprehension of fugitives.

Mr. MacDonald: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in the Hague has been *(a)* to the UN and *(b)* to the UK. [212029]

Mr. MacShane: From 1993–2004 the total cost of the regular budget of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), based in The Hague, was approximately US $830 million.

The regular budget is financed through assessed contributions, in line with an agreed UN scale, paid by all members of the United Nations. We estimate that the United Kingdom's contribution has averaged around 6.5 per cent., giving us a total bill to date of around US $54 million. In both 2004 and 2005 our contribution came to £5.8 million.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many ballot papers for the Iraqi election will be *(a)* printed and *(b)* issued; what arrangements have been put in place to ensure that surplus ballot papers are not used and counted; what arrangements are in place to ensure that there is no (i) multiple voting by individuals and (ii) voting by individuals in place of dead or absentee Iraqis; and if he will make a statement. [207221]

Mr. Mullin: The Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq (IECI) printed 59 million ballot papers for the national and provincial elections. The total number of ballot papers allocated to a polling station was determined by the voter register. A small number of surplus ballots were provided to account for spoilt ballots. The IECI ensured that ballot papers were under observation throughout the process, including putting the ballots in tamper evident bags during transit to the tally centre.

On polling day, voters were required to present identification and were checked against the voter register before entering the polling station and collecting a ballot paper. Once their vote was cast, their finger was marked with indelible ink.

Before the election took place the voter register was presented for challenges. 4,500 deceased voters had already been removed at an earlier stage. Any that were identified during the challenge period were marked as ineligible.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to ensure that *(a)* democratic political parties and *(b)* trade unionists in southern Iraq are protected from terrorists. [210828]

Mr. MacShane: The Iraqi Security Forces and the Multi-National Force, mandated under UN Security Council Resolution 1546, work together to provide security in Iraq, including protection against terrorist attacks. Political parties and trade unionists benefit from the protection provided but there is no special security provision for them. A comprehensive security plan was drawn up for the elections on 30 January. Prime Minister Allawi stated on 30 January that despite the attacks on some polling stations, the security plan for the elections had been a success.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the measures his Department has taken to support polling for Iraqi expatriates in the forthcoming Iraqi elections *(a)* in the United Kingdom and *(b)* in dependent territories; how many eligible electors his Department estimates there to be; and what security measures have been brought in. [211425]

Mr. Mullin: Out of Country Voting (OCV) for the Iraqi elections was organised by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). Voting took place in 14 countries including the UK but not in any of our Overseas Territories. Polling centres were established in London, Manchester and Glasgow. Initial figures suggest that almost 29,000 Iraqis voted in the UK.

HMG did not have a direct role, but British officials met regularly with IOM officials to offer advice and assistance, and the police worked with the IOM to ensure that appropriate security arrangements were in place. There were no significant security incidents at polling centres in the UK.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) when *(a)* he, *(b)* officials of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government last had discussions with members and representatives of (i) the US Administration and (ii) the Iraqi interim authority concerning the detention of Amir Al-Saadi; and if he will make a statement; [212200]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials of his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government had with members and representatives of (i) the US Administration and (ii) the Iraqi interim authority concerning the status under which Amir Al-Saadi is being detained; when this status was last (A) reviewed and (B) changed; and if he will make a statement; [212201]

(3) what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the US Administration and (ii) the Iraqi interim authority concerning the release of Amir Al-Saadi; and if he will make a statement. [212210]

Mr. MacShane: Our Embassy in Baghdad has raised Dr. Al-Saadi's case with the US authorities in Iraq and with senior members of the Iraqi Government. Dr. Al-Saadi was released by the US on 18 January 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the role of Amir Al-Saadi in dealing with UN weapons inspectors since 1991; and if he will make a statement. [212209]

Mr. MacShane: The Government have made no formal assessment of the role of Dr. Al-Saadi in dealing with UN weapons inspectors.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the full text of the Iraqi declaration on Weapons of Mass Destruction of 7 December 2002 to be published. [213105]

Mr. MacShane: The Iraqi declaration of 7 December 2002 was produced in response to UN Security Council Resolution 1441 and was submitted to the United Nations. It remains the property of the United Nations, and it is a matter for them to determine whether it should be made publicly available.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Iraqi Government concerning the release of Dr. Amir Al-Saadi. [213109]

Mr. Mullin: Our embassy in Baghdad has raised Dr. Al-Saadi's case with the US authorities in Iraq and with senior members of the Iraqi Government. Dr. Al-Saadi was released on 18 January 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the Kurdistan Democratic party, (ii) the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and (iii) other Kurdish parties in northern Iraq concerning (1) the elections and (2) the territorial integrity of Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213238]

Mr. MacShane: We regularly meet Kurdish representatives to discuss a range of political issues. We have consistently made clear that we believe the interests of all Iraqis are best served by maintaining the territorial unity of Iraq and by participating in the political transition process laid out in UN Security Council Resolution 1546.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the Turkoman community and (ii) the Turkoman Front on (A) the coalition plans for the future of Iraq, (B) the elections in Iraq and (C) the territorial integrity of Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213239]

Mr. MacShane: We regularly meet Turkoman representatives to discuss a range of political issues. We have consistently made clear that we believe the interests of all Iraqis are best served by maintaining the territorial unity of Iraq and by participating in the political transition process laid out in UN Security Council Resolution 1546. The issue of federalism is a matter for Iraqi's to address once the Transitional National Assembly and Government are in place, in the process of drafting a new constitution, which will be put to a popular referendum in October 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of General Ilker Basbug's statement on 26 January concerning the impact of Kurdish migration to Kirkuk on the stability of the region; and if he will make a statement. [213242]

Mr. MacShane: The UK Government are aware of Turkish concerns about the demographic balance in Kirkuk, but have made clear that this is a matter for the Transitional National Assembly to address as outlined in the Transitional Administrative Law.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the Turkish Government and (ii) the Turkish armed forces concerning the elections in Iraq; what concerns were raised during these discussions; and if he will make a statement. [213243]

Mr. MacShane: Under the UK/Turkey 2004 Prime-Ministerial Summit Action Plan the Governments of the UK and Turkey agreed to set up a strategic dialogue on Iraq in order to promote our shared objective of establishing a stable, prosperous and democratic Iraq. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Iraq with the Turkish Foreign Minister a number of times in 2004, and most recently the Turkish special representative to Iraq, ambassador Osman Koruturk, visited the UK on 26 January and met with my right hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean. Ambassador Koruturk reiterated Turkey's support for the political process in Iraq and the timing of elections. There was also discussion over how to promote greater involvement of all Iraqis in the political process and over the final status of Kirkuk.

The Government also maintain a close dialogue with the Turkish armed forces. The Head of the Turkish General Staff, General Ozkok, visited the UK on

10 January and met with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence, UK Chief of Defence Staff, and various officials.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the US Administration, (ii) the Iraqi interim authority, (iii) the Government of Turkey and (iv) the Government of Israel concerning the territorial integrity of Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213245]

Mr. MacShane: In all our discussions with our international partners the UK has consistently made clear its support for the preservation of the territorial integrity of Iraq.

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what latest estimate of civilian casualties he has received from the Iraqi Ministry of Health. [213492]

Mr. Mullin: The Iraqi Ministry of Health released a statement on 28 January. It stated that records from some 180 hospitals show that:

> "The numbers of casualties for the six months to the end of December are as follows:
>
> Terrorist incidents: 1,233 killed; 4,115 injured
>
> Military action: 2,041 killed; 8,542 injured
>
> Casualties of car bombs and other clearly identifiable terrorist attacks are recorded as being caused by terrorist incidents. All other casualties are recorded as military action. The casualties may include insurgents, civilians, and Iraqi police, who are treated in Ministry of Health hospitals. The casualties may have been killed or injured by terrorist or coalition forces. Coalition forces include Iraqi police, Iraqi security forces, and the multi-national forces".

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what investigations have taken place into allegations of misappropriation of oil during the period of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq. [214146]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1483) of 22 May 2003 established the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) to ensure the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) was used in a transparent manner for the purposes set out in UNSCR 1483. The IAMB consists of members of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the IMF, the United Nations and World Bank and, from 5 March 2004, representatives of the Iraqi administration.

The IAMB approved the appointment of independent accountants, KPMG, to audit the DFI and Iraq's oil export sales. KPMG produced two audit reports covering Coalition Provisional Authority management of the DFI from 22 May 2003 to 28 June 2004. Both audit reports conclude that, with the exception of smuggling,

> "the DFI Statement of Cash Receipts and Payment presents fairly, in all material respects, the receipts and payments of the DFI".

The IAMB report recognises that

> "all known oil proceeds ... have been properly and transparently accounted for in the DFI".

IAMB audit reports are available on the IAMB website at www.iamb.info.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he expects the next stage of the Volker Inquiry into the oil for food scandal in Iraq to report. [214147]

Mr. MacShane *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: The Independent Inquiry Committee established to investigate allegations of mismanagement and corruption in the operation of the Iraq Oil-for-Food Programme released an interim report on 3 February 2005. The Independent Inquiry Committee is expected to publish a further report, not due for at least a few months.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the British embassy in *(a)* Damascus and *(b)* Tehran has made of (i) the reaction of the regimes in (A) Syria and (B) Iran to the recent elections in Iraq and (ii) the implication for relations between each country and Iraq in the future. [214149]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* There has been no official response from the Syrian Government following the elections in Iraq. Prior to the elections, the Syrian Government supported the principle of holding elections but were concerned that the conditions were not ripe because many Iraqis were unlikely to participate.

Syria supported the development of security and reconstruction in Iraq at the Sharm el-Sheik meeting in October 2004. However, Iraq remains concerned that insurgents and former Iraqi regime elements continue to operate from Syria; and Syria is keen to see the Multi-National Force withdraw from Iraq as soon as possible.

Iran has welcomed the elections in Iraq. We understand that Iran's Foreign Minister, Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, has sent a message to Iraq's interim Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, calling it a successful and lively election and an important step towards creating a democratic infrastructure in Iraq. He expressed hope that the election would strengthen relations between Iran and Iraq.

It is clear to us that a constructive relationship between Iran and Iraq would benefit the stability and security of the region. We hope Iran's actions will reflect the commitment made by its government spokesman that it would

> "not interfere in Iraq's internal affairs".

We also hope that following the elections in Iraq there will be a deepening of relations between Iraq and its neighbours.

Kongra-Gel

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the involvement of Kongra-Gel members in *(a)* illegal and *(b)* terrorist acts since 2003; and if he will make a statement. [212292]

Mr. MacShane: The UK and EU recognise Kongra-Gel as an illegal terrorist organisation that has been active in perpetrating illegal and terrorist acts since its formation on 15 November 2003.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210540]

Mr. Straw: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action his Department is taking to help UK victims of the Asian tsunami to return to the UK. [213698]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made available a comprehensive package of assistance measures to those British Nationals, and their families, affected by the tsunami disaster. This includes, where appropriate, meeting the costs of repatriating victims. Full details of this package, as well as more information on the Government's response to the disaster, can be found at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Tsunami webpage, which can be reached at www.fco.gov.uk.

British officials on the ground, including police and forensic experts, continue to work with the relevant local authorities to help identify and return victims to their loved ones as quickly as possible.

Turkey

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the extradition request to Germany for Remzi Kartal announced by the Turkish Justice Minister on 26 January; and if he will make a statement. [213069]

Mr. MacShane: None. Extradition requests between third party countries are a matter for the countries involved.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the size and *(b)* the nature of the fire at the Beko Elektronik warehouse in Beylikduzu on 24 January; and if he will make a statement. [213071]

Mr. MacShane: According to local media sources, the fire at the Beko Electronic Warehouse in Beylikduzu on 24 January caused more than $5 million worth of damage. Up to 35,000 electronic products, the majority being television sets, were apparently destroyed in the blaze.

A press statement released by the military wing of the Kurdish Workers Party claimed responsibility for the fire. We have no reason to believe that the statement is not genuine.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the Roj TV announcement on 25 January, claiming PKK responsibility for the fire at the Beko Elektronik warehouse in Beylikduzu on 24 January; and if he will make a statement. [213072]

Mr. MacShane: We have no reason to believe that the statement reported by Roj TV, in which the Kurdish Workers Party claimed responsibility for the fire, is not genuine.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of *(a)* the treatment of Huseyin Sunal while in police custody in Turkey in April 1996 and *(b)* the European High Court of Human Rights' ruling of 25 January concerning this case; and if he will make a statement. [213073]

Mr. MacShane: Huseyin Sunal was taken into custody by the Turkish authorities on 1 April 1996 on suspicion of car theft. Sunal's claims that he was subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment while in custody, and that he was not given effective legal remedy at a domestic level, have been upheld by the European Court of Human Rights.

There has, however, been significant improvement in Turkey's human rights record since 1996, brought about by the Turkish Government's EU-driven domestic reform programme. The European Commission's 2004 progress report on Turkey states that

> "the Government's serious efforts to implement the legislative reforms have lead to a decline in instances of torture".

Torture of the kind detailed in this case is now extremely rare in Turkey. A package of constitutional amendments was adopted by Turkey in May 2004, that included affirmation that international human rights agreements take precedence over domestic law. The Turkish Justice Minister has publicly affirmed his Government's commitment to uphold European Court of Human Rights judgments.

Ukraine

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to facilitate the long-term goal of the Ukrainian Government of EU accession. [213278]

Mr. MacShane: The Government welcome Ukraine's aspirations and strongly supports efforts to promote economic and political reform, bringing Ukraine closer in line with EU standards. The UK is working with EU partners to develop a programme of enhanced co-operation with Ukraine, responding to the priorities set out by President Yushchenko. The General Affairs and External Relations Council on 31 January welcomed President Yushchenko's intentions, stating that

> "commitment to reform opens the way to a strengthening of relations between the EU and Ukraine."

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the Government will provide to the new Government of Ukraine to enable internal reforms in the legal system, the media and minority rights. [213279]

Mr. MacShane: The UK supports internal reform in Ukraine through both bilateral and multilateral programmes. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global Opportunities Fund is supporting projects in Ukraine focusing on election transparency and accountability, support for the media in promoting accountability, and efforts to develop efficient and transparent policies and processes in border management.

The Department for International Development's bilateral programme for Ukraine this financial year is expected to be £6 million, focusing on, inter alia, administrative and economic reform, strengthening governance, and working with civil society. The UK is working with EU partners to ensure that European Commission funding is able to respond quickly to the new Ukrainian Government's priorities for reform. The UK also supports the IMF, World Bank, and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in their efforts to promote reform in Ukraine.

Information Society World Summit

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what preparations his Department is undertaking for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis; what Department is taking the lead role in organising and preparing the UK Governmental delegation; and if he will make a statement. [211788]

Mr. Mullin: The UK Government are actively involved in preparations for the World Summit on the Information Society in Tunis. My hon. Friend the then Minister for Energy, e-commerce and Postal services at the Department for Trade and Industry (Mr. Timms), led a UK delegation to the first summit in Geneva in December 2003 and officials are participating in the Preparatory Committees leading to the Tunis Summit this November.

The UK will attend the summit as EU president and will be pressing for full participation by interested members of civil society, including NGOs and the business sector. My right hon. Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean raised these issues during a recent visit to Tunis. The summit itself will focus on implementation of the Geneva Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action, including internet governance issues and financial mechanisms for bridging the digital divide.

SCOTLAND

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211683]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. In 2003–04, the office spent £10,044 on external consultants; no expenditure has been incurred so far during 2004–05. Budgets for future years have yet to be agreed.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much the Department spent on lawyers in each year since 1997; how many *(a)* actions, *(b)* settlements, *(c)* court cases there were in each year; and what the costs were of each settlement. [206453]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The in-house solicitors of the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland provide legal assistance to the Scotland Office as well as other UK Departments; it is not however possible to separately identify the legal staff costs involved in defending actions against the Secretary of State for Scotland.

There have been two actions raised against the Secretary of State for Scotland, one of which is ongoing. One case was abandoned by the pursuers but the Office incurred £6,363 in outlays. The current estimated cost of the ongoing case is £6,000.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the cost of travel within the UK for the Department was in each year since 1997; and how much of this was spent on *(a)* hire cars, *(b)* helicopter hire, *(c)* hotel accommodation and *(d)* subsistence. [206470]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The office also provides support services to the Office of the Advocate-General for Scotland (OAG); prior to 2003–04, separate records were not maintained of the travel costs for the two offices. Expenditure was as follows.

Scotland Office/OAG

£

	Total travel costs	Of which: Hire cars	Of which: Hotel accommodation and subsistence[1]
1999–2000[2]	212,402	1,576	36,482
2000–01	360,085	3,055	87,005
2001–02	332,560	3,653	73,111
2002–03	322,377	4,499	62,218

£

2003–04	*Scotland Office*	*OAG*
Total travel costs	190,585	66,261
Of which:		
Hire cars	3,282	60
Of which:		
Hotel accommodation and subsistence[1]	46,191	12,328

[1] The office does not record the cost of hotel accommodation separately from the cost of subsistence

[2] Part year

There has been no expenditure on helicopter hire.

All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the staff handbook and all ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211684]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The Office incurred no expenditure on these matters during 2003–04; no expenditure has been incurred so far during 2004–05. Budgets for future years have yet to be agreed.

Ministerial Visits

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many times a Minister in his Department has made an official visit to *(a)* an injured soldier and *(b)* bereaved families of soldiers; and who the Minister was in each case. [214579]

Mr. Darling: These are primarily matters for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Defence for obvious reasons, and I refer the hon. Member to the reply he received on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 899W. Scotland Office Ministers have not therefore undertaken any such visits.

Scotland Act

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what amendments have been made to the Scotland Act 1998 in each year since 1998. [212217]

Mrs. McGuire: As the information is rather lengthy, I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Libraries of the House.

HEALTH

Agenda for Change

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* funding will be made available and *(b)* time will be set aside for training and development of health professionals under the Agenda for Change programme. [208854]

Mr. Hutton: By 2005–06, we will have made available around £1 billion of extra investment to fund the implementation of Agenda for Change. This is in addition to the costs of the general pay uplift of 10 per cent. over three years to 2005–06. The National Health Service knowledge and skills framework provides a single, comprehensive framework on which to base the review and development of all non-medical staff in the NHS. This will ensure better links between education and development and career and pay progression. This is additional to any national or local monies allocated for training and development. Detailed arrangements for training and development is a matter for local employers.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Agenda for Change programme applies to staff employed by private companies providing services within the NHS. [211957]

Mr. Hutton: Agenda for change is a collective agreement between the Department and trade unions representing national health service employees. It applies to a wide range of people employed by NHS organisations.

Private sector contractors were not involved in the agenda for change negotiations and are not party to the collective agreement, which implements agenda for change.

Blood Glucose Strips

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts (PCTs) operate a policy restricting the number of blood glucose strips available to people with diabetes; and how many blood test strips have been supplied to patients in England on average per PCT in each of the past five years. [214518]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on primary care trust (PCT) policies relating to the availability of blood glucose strips is not centrally collected. PCTs plan their services according to local need, taking into account relevant national guidelines.

The following table shows the number of blood glucose monitoring strips dispensed in England from 1999–2003.

Number of blood glucose monitoring strips dispensed in the community in England, and average number per PCT: 1999–2003

Million

	Number of blood glucose monitoring strips	*Average number of blood glucose monitoring strips dispensed per PCT*
1999	212.3	0.7
2000	252.1	0.8
2001	301.7	1.0
2002	361.8	1.2
2003	398.4	1.3

Notes:

1. The prescription information is from the Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) system, from the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA), and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispenses in the community, ie by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.

2. The average number of blood glucose monitoring strips per PCT has been calculated by dividing the total number of strips by 303 (the number of PCTs). It is not a weighted average and hence does not take into account PCT populations, or number of registered patients per PCT. PCTs came into existence in October 2002. For consistency, the average number of strips per PCT has used the current 303 PCTs for all five years.

3. Blood glucose monitoring strips are defined within the British National Formulary (BNF) paragraph 6.1.6 "Diagnostic and monitoring agents for diabetes mellitus".

4. More information on prescriptions dispensed in the community in England are available at: http://www.publications.doh.gov.uk/prescriptionstatistics/index.htm

Source:

Prescription Cost Analysis (PCA) data from the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA).

Capital Investment (Worcestershire)

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital investment was made in NHS facilities in Worcestershire in each year since 1992. [213457]

Dr. Ladyman: The table shows the net book value of purchased capital additions for national health service trusts and primary care trusts (PCTs) in Worcestershire since 1996–97. Figures from before 1996–97 are not available.

	£000
1996–97	7,161
1997–98	8,487
1998–99	5,269
1999–2000	8,506
2000–01	9,185
2001–02	11,873
2002–03	54,923
2003–04	28,109

Notes:

1 The organisations included are: Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust—since 2002, and its predecessors:

Alexandra Healthcare NHS Trust, Worcester Royal Infirmary NHS Trust, and Kidderminster Healthcare NHS Trust, Worcestershire Partnership NHS Trust—since 2000, and its predecessor:

Worcestershire Community and Mental Health Services NHS Trust, Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service NHS Trust, South Worcestershire PCT, Redditch and Bromsgrove PCT, Wyre Forest PCT.

2. The figures in the table do not include private finance initiative (PFI) expenditure where PFI costs are revenue expenditure in the books of NHS bodies.

3. Capital investment will vary between years owing to the investment decisions at individual NHS bodies.

Source:

Audited summarisation schedules of relevant NHS trusts 1996–97 to 2003–04.

Audited summarisation schedules of relevant PCTs 2001–02 to 2003–04.

Dentistry

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage change has been in the number of NHS dentists in south-west London in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [213544]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the percentage change in the number of general dental service or personal dental service dentists, between adjacent years, in South West London from 1997 to 2004, by parliamentary constituency.

Parliamentary Constituency Name	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Battersea	-0.02	0.04	0.02	0.16	-0.11	-0.12	0.04
Carshalton and Wellington	0.09	0.03	-0.03	0.08	0.15	-0.04	0.02
Croydon Central	-0.01	0.01	0.02	0.05	-0.01	-0.02	0.06
Croydon North	-0.05	-0.02	0.04	-0.07	-0.06	-0.02	0.35
Croydon South	0.05	-0.08	0.03	-0.03	0.06	0.03	0.13
Kingston and Surbiton	0.00	0.06	0.06	-0.02	0.07	0.00	0.02
Mitcham and Morden	0.03	0.03	0.03	-0.03	0.13	-0.03	0.31
Putney	0.12	-0.04	-0.04	0.08	-0.18	0.02	0.06
Richmond Park	0.05	0.02	-0.02	0.05	0.06	-0.08	0.08
Sutton and Cheam	0.13	0.08	-0.05	0.06	0.01	-0.04	-0.02
Tooting	0.03	0.18	-0.03	-0.03	-0.14	-0.05	0.11
Twickenham	0.04	0.02	0.04	-0.02	0.07	0.05	0.00
Wimbledon	0.00	0.06	0.08	0.04	-0.12	0.02	0.10

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists were employed in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the last five years. [213056]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the number of dentists employed in Stoke-on-Trent in each of the last five years.

Stoke-on-Trent	*Number of dentists*
2000	88
2001	90
2002	88
2003	90
2004	96

The figures are based on the numbers of dentists with open general dental service or personal dental service contracts in the North Stoke Primary Care Trust area and the South Stoke Primary Care Trust area.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have started work full-time for the NHS in Stoke-on-Trent since the inception of the Returning to Dentistry campaign. [213074]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Eleven dentists (personal dental service or general dental service) have started working in Stoke-on-Trent since July 2004.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of dentists in Kingston and Surbiton stopped taking NHS patients in each year since 1997; [213545]

(2) what percentage of dentists in London stopped taking NHS patients in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [213546]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The majority of dental practices treat both private and national health service patients under an "open" contract with a primary care trust. The Office of Fair Trading report "The private dentistry market in the UK", published in March 2003 estimated that out of 11,000 dental practices about 210 are private. The table shows by London constituency the numbers of dentists who stopped doing general or personal dental service work in England and Wales during the year as a percentage of the total number of dentists for the years 1997 to 2004. These figures do not include dentists who moved to other areas and continued to work in the general or personal dental services. The dentists could have ceased doing NHS work for a number of different reasons, for example, retirement or to take a short-term absence, apart from the reason that the dentist only wished to treat private patients. New contractual arrangements, which we are to introduce by April 2006, are intended to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists.

Dentistry—percentage not taking patients in London 1997–2004

Constituency name	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Barking	3.7	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	2.5	1.2	0.0
Battersea	1.2	1.7	1.2	3.0	3.0	2.9	5.8	2.2
Beckenham	2.3	2.4	0.0	1.6	0.8	3.1	1.6	4.7
Bethnal Green and Bow	2.9	1.8	2.9	1.7	0.6	0.6	3.0	1.7
Bexleyheath and Crayford	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.7	4.4	4.2	1.5	2.8
Brent East	2.4	1.6	1.6	3.3	2.3	1.6	1.6	0.0
Brent North	0.6	2.5	3.0	0.6	1.8	1.2	3.1	1.2
Brent South	2.2	2.1	2.2	0.7	2.8	1.4	1.5	1.4
Brentford and Isleworth	1.0	0.5	1.1	5.3	3.4	8.5	1.1	3.8
Bromley and Chislehurst	2.9	3.6	0.7	3.0	1.5	3.1	3.8	4.6
Camberwell and Peckham	2.0	0.0	5.2	3.2	2.1	1.0	4.0	1.0

Dentistry—percentage not taking patients in London 1997–2004

Constituency name	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Carshalton and Wellington	1.0	1.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	2.3	3.3	5.5
Chingford and Woodford Green	1.9	2.9	2.9	1.9	1.0	3.7	1.8	0.9
Chipping Barnet	0.8	1.6	2.4	0.8	2.5	0.0	4.2	0.8
Cities of London and Westminster	3.1	3.8	5.6	3.7	3.4	4.2	2.7	1.2
Croydon Central	4.7	2.1	2.9	1.3	2.1	3.3	1.6	2.5
Croydon North	1.3	6.5	2.0	1.4	3.6	4.3	2.6	0.7
Croydon South	4.4	2.1	8.0	1.1	5.6	2.2	0.0	2.2
Dagenham	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.8	0.0	3.4	3.4	0.0
Dulwich and West Norwood	1.6	5.4	1.7	1.6	3.2	0.0	4.8	3.3
Ealing North	0.7	3.8	3.9	6.4	2.3	4.0	1.6	4.7
Ealing, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	1.4	1.0	1.4	8.1	2.4	6.0	0.5	3.0
Ealing, Southall	2.5	1.6	2.5	4.9	2.2	5.1	0.8	2.1
East Ham	3.4	0.0	6.0	3.3	4.4	1.1	0.0	1.2
Edmonton	2.1	2.1	6.9	2.2	3.4	3.2	1.1	0.0
Eltham	2.0	3.2	2.2	1.1	2.1	2.0	1.1	1.1
Enfield North	1.4	3.6	0.0	2.2	3.1	2.2	2.8	3.7
Enfield, Southgate	0.8	4.2	2.5	1.6	0.8	2.4	3.4	6.3
Erith and Thamesmead	1.2	3.5	2.4	0.0	3.6	3.4	1.2	3.4
Feltham and Heston	1.7	0.8	0.0	0.8	0.8	2.6	0.9	2.5
Finchley and Golders Green	2.4	1.7	5.5	3.6	4.3	4.9	1.7	2.3
Greenwich and Woolwich	0.0	5.0	1.3	6.5	3.8	2.5	0.0	1.2
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	2.1	1.1	2.4	1.1	3.5	1.0	4.4	1.1
Hackney South and Shoreditch	0.0	4.3	2.6	3.0	3.7	1.5	4.5	3.0
Hammersmith and Fulham	0.4	1.3	1.8	4.7	2.7	6.6	2.7	5.5
Hampstead and Highgate	3.8	0.7	3.3	2.2	3.9	5.5	4.0	3.9
Harrow East	1.3	1.8	3.3	2.6	1.3	1.9	0.6	0.6
Harrow West	0.8	1.7	0.8	0.0	3.3	2.3	2.5	2.4
Hayes and Harlington	2.1	0.0	2.3	1.0	4.4	4.3	0.0	2.0
Hendon	1.2	2.4	3.0	0.6	2.5	3.6	2.4	1.8
Holborn and St. Pancras	3.0	5.6	2.6	3.5	4.9	5.6	2.3	2.7
Hornchurch	0.0	1.3	1.3	0.0	4.4	1.3	2.5	3.8
Hornsey and Wood Green	0.8	2.6	0.8	3.0	5.3	2.6	1.3	2.6
Ilford North	0.8	1.7	0.8	1.7	1.8	3.5	1.7	2.5
Ilford South	0.6	1.2	1.3	2.5	2.7	4.6	1.3	2.0
Islington North	2.1	2.2	0.0	4.0	1.5	2.5	1.5	2.2
Islington South and Finsbury	2.3	2.8	2.8	2.9	4.5	5.8	2.9	4.2
Kensington and Chelsea	0.0	4.8	5.1	2.1	1.4	5.3	5.3	0.0
Kingston and Surbiton	0.0	0.8	3.3	6.0	5.4	3.5	2.4	2.4
Lewisham East	3.4	1.0	1.3	4.4	1.2	0.0	3.4	2.1
Lewisham West	0.0	2.3	3.9	1.2	3.3	6.5	4.5	0.6
Lewisham, Deptford	1.8	0.9	3.6	2.9	5.6	2.8	0.0	1.8
Leyton and Wanstead	[illegible]	1.1	3.1	1.6	3.0	0.0	1.4	1.4
Mitcham and Morden	2.3	2.5	0.0	4.7	3.3	2.5	4.8	1.2
North Southwark and Bermondsey	3.2	3.3	0.8	0.7	5.8	4.1	2.4	0.0
Old Bexley and Sidcup	6.0	[illegible]	4.1	1.0	3.9	3.0	0.9	3.1
Orpington	5.2	2.0	0.0	3.0	3.0	2.0	3.0	2.0
Poplar and Canning Town	2.7	4.8	0.9	2.8	3.6	4.9	0.9	3.0
Putney	1.8	1.2	3.7	4.3	1.9	5.2	6.5	3.7
Regent's Park and North Kensington	1.4	3.3	0.6	0.7	2.8	0.0	1.9	0.0
Richmond Park	2.1	1.4	2.7	3.5	3.5	1.3	4.1	1.4
Romford	1.2	0.0	6.7	2.5	3.8	5.1	3.8	3.9
Ruislip-Northwood	3.3	0.9	3.4	0.8	5.9	1.8	4.2	1.6
Streatham	1.6	2.9	2.9	3.2	2.3	3.9	2.7	2.8
Sutton and Cheam	0.0	2.3	1.5	3.2	3.0	5.3	3.9	4.4
Tooting	2.3	5.3	1.5	2.9	4.1	4.5	2.8	2.7
Tottenham	3.9	2.0	1.0	3.0	1.9	4.0	2.9	4.0
Twickenham	2.7	2.7	5.3	2.7	5.5	2.7	1.8	4.4
Upminster	1.6	1.7	3.5	5.2	1.5	3.4	1.6	1.7
Uxbridge	3.8	5.8	4.0	1.3	5.5	0.0	2.6	1.2
Vauxhall	5.3	4.3	8.9	1.8	3.1	3.7	1.2	3.7
Walthamstow	3.0	4.1	0.0	0.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	0.0
West Ham	3.3	2.1	1.3	0.7	2.1	2.1	2.7	4.1
Wimbledon	2.5	4.0	1.6	5.0	0.0	6.9	2.6	0.0

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time to become a patient of an NHS dentist in south-west London was in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [213547]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213617]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has three staff restaurants operated by its catering contractor under a nil subsidy arrangement. The Department makes no direct financial contribution to the operation of these facilities.

The Department does not operate any bars.

Departmental Staff

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the staffing levels in his Department's Tobacco Control Division were on *(a)* 31 May 1997, *(b)* 30 June 2001 and *(c)* 1 January 2005; and if he will make a statement. [211145]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Detailed historical information at the level requested is not held. The number of staff in the Department's tobacco programme on 1 January 2005 was five. A further member of staff joined on 5 January. This number does not include those posts working on tobacco policy elsewhere in the Department, for example working on the media campaign in the communications division, along with other duties.

Food Supplements Regulations

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment his Department has made of which supplements will be *(a)* banned and *(b)* reformulated under the food supplements regulations; [208061]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the public health consequences of *(a)* prohibiting certain (i) vitamins and (ii) minerals and *(b)* reducing the potency of certain supplements with particular reference to (A) antioxidants, (B) pre-natal nutrients and (C) high-dose vitamin C, under the food supplements directive; [208062]

(3) whether the list of approved supplements set out in annexes 1 and 2 of the Food Supplements Directive 2003 will be further reduced before the implementing regulations come into force; [208063]

(4) what information has been provided to the public to ensure that they are fully aware of *(a)* which supplements are to be (i) prohibited and (ii) reformulated, *(b)* the reasons for the prohibitions and reformulations and *(c)* what alternative supplements they may take to achieve comparable results; [208064]

(5) what assessment has been made of the likely economic impact of the food supplements regulations on food supplement *(a)* producers and *(b)* retailers in the UK; [208065]

(6) if the Department will review the economic impact of the food supplements regulations once they have come into effect. [208070]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the dossiers for ingredients not listed in the food supplements directive (FSD), and which can continue to be used in supplements on sale in the United Kingdom after 1 August, will be available on the European Food Safety Authority and Food Standards Agency (FSA) websites. The FSA will, in addition, provide information on the ingredients listed in the FSD and on the scope of the directive. It is the responsibility of food supplements manufacturers to ensure that the products on sale after 1 August meet the requirements of the FSD and to decide what information is available to consumers on the products on sale. Manufacturers have had three years in which to produce dossiers.

No assessment has been made by the FSA of which supplements will be banned or reformulated under the FSD. The number of supplements which will be banned or need to be reformulated under the FSD will be dependent on the number of dossiers submitted by industry for assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). Where a dossier for a particular ingredient has been submitted to either the UK or another European Union member state then that ingredient will be able to continue to be used in food supplements until December 2009 pending an opinion from EFSA on its use beyond 2009.

An assessment of the economic impact of the Food Supplement Regulations was made in the Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which accompanied the regulations. Article 4(8) of the FSD states that, no later than 12 July 2007, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council a report on whether the directive should be amended to increase its scope to include other nutrients as well as vitamins and minerals. This will also include a proposal for any amendments to the directive that the Commission deems necessary. The FSA will provide any information requested from member states by the Commission to inform this report.

The directive does not at present set limits for the levels of vitamins, which can be used in food supplements. High doses of vitamins, which are listed in annex one of the directive, can continue to be used after 1 August when the directive comes into effect.

The list of supplements in annexes 1 and 2 of the FSD has not been altered since the directive was agreed in July 2002. There is no reason to assume the list would be reduced unless new evidence came to light which raised questions regarding the safety of the vitamins and minerals listed.

General Medical Services Contract

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the new GMS contract on the operation of community hospitals in the out-of-hours period. [211541]

Mr. Hutton: Where community hospitals are part of out-of-hours services, primary care trusts and providers must ensure that adequate medical cover is provided to meet patients' unscheduled need, through providing appropriate terms and conditions for staff.

General Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of pay variations in the remuneration of general practitioners working in different community hospitals in England. [211549]

Mr. Hutton: The Government asked the NHS Confederation to consider this issue, as part of a study into the terms and conditions of non-consultant career grade doctors, and to make recommendations. The NHS Confederation have identified that there is a range of contractual mechanisms that national health service commissioners can use more flexibly to ensure that general practitioners working in community hospitals are remunerated appropriately. The Government has welcomed these observations and accepted the recommendation that these are matters for local negotiation.

Mr. Pickthall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the effect of targets for general practitioner appointments on the new appointment systems general practitioner practices are adopting. [211986]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The Department routinely monitors the performance of the national health service against the NHS Plan target for primary care access. This process has identified that some practices are not allowing patients to book appointments more than one or two days ahead. This is not consistent with delivery of a patient-focused service and the Department is working with strategic health authorities to support primary care trusts and general practice in removing such restrictions on patient choice.

Glaucoma

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been diagnosed with glaucoma in each year since 1989, broken down by age. [213224]

Dr. Ladyman: The vast majority of patients with glaucoma are treated as outpatients. Although aggregate outpatient data has been collected for sometime now, the central collection of detailed clinical information has not been mandated. However, processes are being put in place to enable the Department to collect and publish this information in the future.

Patients diagnosed with glaucoma and treated as inpatients from 1995–96—2003–04 in national health service hospitals in England are shown in the following table. Data is not available on a comparable basis prior to 1995–96.

	Hospital in-patient admissions by age			
	0 to 16	*17 to 64*	*65 and over*	*Not known*
1995–96	881	7,115	17,904	20
1996–97	917	6,927	16,572	23
1997–98	954	6,491	15,036	17
1998–99	1,079	6,003	12,634	22
1999–2000	1,128	5,277	10,928	14
2000–01	1,225	4,899	9,837	6
2001–02	1,251	4,849	9,304	8
2002–03	1,293	4,734	8,585	8
2003–04	1,132	4,433	8,397	7

Admissions do not represent the total number of in-patients, as an individual may have more than one admission within the year. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2002–03 and 2003–04, which are not yet adjusted.

Neck of Femur Fractures

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the mortality rate was of people admitted to hospital with fractured neck of femur in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04, broken down by age group; [214287]

(2) what the average wait between admission and surgery was for people admitted to hospital for fractured neck of femur in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04; [214404]

(3) how many people over the age of 60 years were admitted to hospital in England with fractured neck of femur in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04. [214405]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Information on the median wait between admission and surgery and the number of people over the age of 60 years admitted to hospital for fractured neck of femur is given in the table. Data on the mortality rate of people admitted to hospital for fractured neck of femur are not collected centrally.

Count of admissions by age group and median pre-operative duration for fractured neck of femur—NHS hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2003–04

	61 + years	*Median pre-operative duration following admission (days)*
1997–98	35,763	1
1998–99	37,769	1
1999–2000	38,905	1
2000–01	37,408	1
2001–02	37,903	1
2002–03	41,530	1
2003–04	41,704	1

Notes:

1. Finished in-year admissions—A finished in-year admission is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider, excluding admissions beginning before 1 April at the start of the data year.

Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)—The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (7 prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. Ungrossed data—Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Department of Health.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213632]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department produces one in-house magazine for its staff, *Link*. Costs for the present contractor for each calendar year from 1999 are shown in the table. Costs prior to August 1998 can be provided only at disproportionate cost, so 1998 figures are excluded.

£

	Cost
1999	125,411
2000	141,838
2001	133,899
2002	155,687
2003	146,489
2004	142,698

Insulin

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will ensure that the patient information leaflet for human insulin includes reference to the full range of side effects experienced by those taking human insulin, as reported to the Committee on Safety of Medicines. [211590]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: The current authorised product information provides details on both common and less common side effects associated with human insulin. The most common adverse drug reactions reported are decreases or increases in blood sugar, headache, injection site reaction and pruritis (itching). Less common adverse drug reactions include allergic reactions, muscle pain, depression, rash, diarrhoea, fatigue, palpitations and vomiting.

Not all suspected adverse drug reactions reported to the Committee on Safety of Medicines through the yellow card scheme are listed in the product information for prescribers (the summary of product characteristics) and patients (patient information leaflet). A report of a suspected adverse drug reaction does not necessarily mean that it was caused by the drug. Reports of suspected adverse reactions are evaluated as they are received and are added to the product information if there is sufficient evidence to suggest that they are at least possibly associated with the medicine.

The product information for Lantus (insulin glargine) was recently updated to warn about the possibility of interactions with treatments for schizophrenia and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) following review of spontaneous reports.

Kidney Disease

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the relationship between high blood pressure and kidney disease. [211943]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There is good research evidence to show that blood pressure control can slow the decline in kidney function in people in the early stages of chronic kidney disease. In addition, high blood pressure may be a sign of undetected chronic kidney disease.

The national service frameworks for renal services, Part two (published 3 February), and for coronary heart disease, and National Institute Clinical Excellence clinical guidelines on the management of hypertension, recognise the link between high blood pressure and kidney disease and recommend that people with raised blood pressure should have their kidney function measured routinely.

Mental Health (Young People)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the Government intend to reduce the number of young people waiting over 26 weeks to see child and adolescent mental health service staff. [213367]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government remain committed to further improve access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and the reduction of waiting times. The Department is investing an additional £300 million in CAMHS during the period from 2003–04 to 2005–06. This additional funding, together with the assistance available from CAMHS regional development workers, will help to reduce the waiting time for CAMHS.

In line with all other specialities, the Government are reducing waiting times for the first outpatient appointment with a consultant specialising in child and adolescent psychiatry following a general practitioner referral. By the end of 2005, the maximum wait will have been cut from 17 weeks, to 13 weeks.

The children's national service framework, published September in 2004, sets out the standards that need to be adopted by commissioners and providers of CAMHS. Adoption of these standards will ensure that all children and young people have access to mental health problems will have access to timely, integrated and high quality mental health services.

Mobility Aids

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are taken to ensure that walking sticks, crutches and similar aids are returned to the NHS by patients once they are no longer needed. [213950]

Dr. Ladyman: It is a local decision about whether trusts want national health service patients to return walking sticks, crutches or similar aids. How they achieve that is for local determination.

MRI Scans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations he has received on the recent contract with Alliance Medical to provide the NHS with mobile MRI scanning units; what assessment he has made of the impact of the contract on NHS *(a)* recruitment and *(b)* retention of (i) radiographers and (ii) other diagnostic staff; and if he will make a statement. [213925]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]*: Written representation has been received from the Society of Radiographers, the British Medical Association, right hon. and hon. Members and the public. The independent sector will provide additional staff to ease pressure on existing national health service diagnostic teams and the mobile magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning units will ensure that the NHS and patients get early access to this additional diagnostic capacity.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* evaluation, *(b)* monitoring and *(c)* data collection his Department is undertaking on the implementation and performance of the contract with Alliance Medical for mobile MRI scans; and if he will make a statement. [213926]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]*: Contract monitoring is carried out regularly with Alliance Medical and a benchmarking audit of image quality and reports is to be undertaken in 2005. In addition, Alliance Medical figures for November 2004 show that 96 per cent. of respondents rated the service above average or excellent.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans his Department has to put out to tender further contracts for *(a)* MRI scans, *(b)* CT scans and *(c)* other diagnostic procedures; and if he will make a statement. [213928]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 3 February 2005]*: The Department is currently working on plans for phase two of its independent sector procurement programme, which will include additional diagnostic services in order to help the national health service achieve future waiting time targets.

NHS Staff Suspensions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the cost to the National Health Service of suspensions of medical and dental staff in the latest quarter for which figures are available. [205024]

Mr. Hutton: Latest figures to the end of September 2004 show there were a total of 19 suspensions of medical and dental staff and there is a downward trend. The annual cost of these suspensions to the National Health Service is estimated at about £1 million.

NHS Trusts

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS Trusts are taking part in merger talks/proposals. [213211]

Mr. Hutton: Since introducing Shifting the Balance of Power, the Department does not collect information centrally on configuration reviews and there is no obligation on the national health service locally to report on any service change they are considering.

However, any change to trust constitutions that requires an amendment to the Statutory Instrument (Establishment Orders) is sent to the Department for approval by Ministers. The only such change the Department is aware of is the forthcoming merger of mental health trusts in Surrey. In this merger, the Surrey Oaklands NHS Trust, the Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust and the North West Surrey Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust are to be dissolved, and a single trust is to be established in their place, to be called the Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust. This will be established from 1 April this year subject to Parliamentary approval.

Paddington Basin Hospital

Mr. Wilkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will publish in full the outline business case for the Paddington Basin NHS Hospital project. [208893]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 19 January 2005]*: Under departmental guidance, national health service trusts are required to make the outline business case (OBC) publicly available no later than one month from its approval.

In this case, the OBC has not yet been approved.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Ashford on 16 December 2004, reference 206718. [211748]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I replied to the hon. Member on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 887W.

Protection of Vulnerable Adults

Ms Shipley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what timetable has been set for the extension of the Protection of Vulnerable Adults scheme to all NHS workers; and what plans are in place to ensure that extension is effective. [213295]

Mr. Hutton: Options for extending the protection of vulnerable adults scheme to the national health service are currently under consideration. I will inform the hon. Member of the decision in due course.

Residential Care Costs

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average fee paid by each social services department in England for care for the elderly in a *(a)* privately owned and *(b)* local authority-owned residential home was in the latest year for which figures are available. [214074]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available centrally.

Retinal Screening

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to ensure that NHS providers have the maximum choice of suppliers of retinal screening; [214170]

(2) whether the list of accredited suppliers to the National Retinopathy Screening Programme will be updated via a tender process during 2004. [214407]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: National health service providers have a number of suppliers to choose from when selecting suppliers for their retinal screening programme.

The NHS Purchasing and Supply agency are in discussions with staff from the National Retinopathy Screening Programme and the National Programme for information technology in order to decide on the benefits of undertaking a tender exercise for software for this programme in the light of the recent developments in this project.

Rural Areas

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what initiatives his Department has introduced since 2001 to support health services in rural areas. [213102]

Mr. Hutton: The Government's modernisation of the national health service, underpinned by a sustained investment programme, is delivering more staff, faster treatment, more hospitals, a new focus on quality and, crucially, more choice for patients. Coupled with an increase in the NHS budget from £43.9 billion in 2000–01 to £69 billion in 2004–05 has come an increased devolution of power and responsibility to the front line NHS: 80 per cent. of the NHS budget in England is now devolved to local primary care trusts (PCTs), and central targets have been dramatically reduced to give the local NHS in rural and urban areas alike the headroom to address local priorities.

The Government have therefore given PCTs in rural areas the resources and the authority to make a difference locally and address rural needs. At the national level the Department is committed to rural proofing policies so that they take into account the needs of people living in rural areas. To further support the rural proofing agenda, last year the Government incorporated the rural proofing checklist within the regulatory impact assessment framework, thus ensuring that new policies are screened for their impact on rural communities.

The Department also supports rural health initiatives through grants to the voluntary sector. The Department has funded the Institute of Rural Health since 2001. The Institute is currently working on two projects (i) the rural health forum project which provides a regular interface between Government Departments and health providers at national, regional and local levels, and (ii) a rural proofing toolkit which will help PCTs and policy makers identify the health needs of residents in rural areas and help incorporate those needs into policy making at a strategic level.

The Department has also taken specific actions to help patients living with stress and mental health problems in rural areas. The National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) in implementing the national suicide prevention strategy is providing specific support for farmers and their families. We are also part funding a network of support for people in rural communities who are suffering from stress.

Saneline

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations he has received about his Department's support for Saneline. [208490]

Ms Winterton: As of 18 January 2005, the Department has received 14 written representations concerning the Department's two-year contract with Saneline which will end on 31 March 2005.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make it his policy to increase his Department's funding for Saneline in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [208492]

Ms Winterton: The Department has provided some £5 million of funding, over three years, for mental health helplines provided by voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations. This funding can be accessed by VCS organisations via the mental health helplines investment framework that has been commissioned to support providers of mental health helplines in developing capacity; enabling 24 hour access, and to increase the quality of service provision through accredited training and accreditation against quality standards.

The investment framework will be launched by the Department next month and applications for funding will be considered by a steering group represented by a range of mental health helpline providers, including Saneline.

In common with other voluntary and community sector organisations, Saneline will be eligible to submit an application for funding from the Department's section 64 scheme of grants for 2005–06.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the contribution of Saneline to the provision of support and advice to mentally ill people and their families; what assessment he has made of the impact of any reduction in Saneline's activities as a result of funding shortfall; and if he will make a statement. [208493]

Ms Winterton: Saneline provides information, advice and emotional support for people with mental health problems and responds to around 50,000 callers per year. Saneline operates a virtual network with calls routed to whichever site has capacity. At present, Saneline is operating two of its three centres without a reduction in capacity. Saneline refers many of its callers to a range of other helpline providers who, jointly, take a significant number of mental health calls.

There are around 60 other mental health helpline providers within the voluntary and community sector that provide an excellent service and, between them, handle significant number of calls on mental health issues. Of these, Samaritans receive in excess of 4.8 million contacts a year, of which 2.5 million are by telephone and the majority of these are from people with mental health problems. The organisation Rethink's helplines handle approximately 80,000 calls per year. The majority of these helpline providers, including SANE, Samaritans, Rethink and Mind, are members of the Department's mental health helplines partnership, which aims to achieve greater consistency, quality and choice for people who use members' helpline services.

In the statutory sector, NHS Direct provides a 24 hour, seven days a week service and its fully-trained staff respond to about 325,000 calls per year from people with mental health issues. NHS Direct works in close partnership with the member organisations of the mental health helplines partnership, including Saneline.

The Department's contract with Saneline was for two years and it ends on 31 March 2005. The total contract value was £2 million. Part of the contract payment was delayed during discussions on contractual detail with Saneline and when invoices were delayed as a result. No formal assessment of the impact of any potential reduction in Saneline's activities has been made. Saneline, like other voluntary and community sector organisations in health and social care, can apply for further funding.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the impact of Saneline's planned closure of its Macclesfield office on the well-being of mentally ill people and their families seeking support and advice in the area for which it provides coverage. [208494]

Ms Winterton: No formal assessment of the impact of any potential reduction in Saneline's activities has been made. However, we are aware that Saneline operates a virtual network and calls are routed to whichever one of its centres has capacity. This means that although Saneline is currently operating only two of three centres, callers from Macclesfield can continue to access the service.

In addition to the services offered by Saneline, there is also a diverse range of mental health helplines provided by the statutory and voluntary and community sectors, including NHS Direct, which provide easily accessible services for people with mental health problems, their carers and families—including people in the Macclesfield area who are seeking support and advice.

Secure Units

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the medium secure units for people with dangerous and severe personality disorders operating in England; and how many inmates have escaped or absconded from each in each of the last five years. [210784]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Arnold Lodge in Leicester is the only medium secure unit that currently takes patients with a dangerous and severe personality disorder (DSPD). The unit has a personality disorder unit (PDU) that has 12 beds. Of these, five are available for patients with a diagnosis of DSPD.

From the DSPD beds, no patients have absconded. From the personality disorder beds, two patients have failed to return from leave.

When a decision is taken to send a patient on leave, a detailed risk assessment is carried out beforehand. This details the potential risks involved should a patient abscond and a plan is in place to deal with these risks should it happen.

Once a patient is known to have absconded, the local police are informed and any people who from the risk assessment have been identified as being vulnerable. On call arrangements are put in place and local, regional and national briefing if required takes place.

In both the cases of absconcion from the PD unit at Arnold Lodge, both patients were returned to the unit within five to six hours. In the first case, the patient returned to the unit himself, in the second case, the patient missed a train back and presented to a police station and asked to be returned to Arnold Lodge.

Specialist Nurses

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what budget is allocated for training and development for a specialist nurse post. [208855]

Mr. Hutton: The training and development of nurses to fit them to hold specialist posts is a matter for employers locally. The cost of training may vary according to specialism and the type of training or development involved and will be identified by employers in conjunction with educational commissioners and higher education institutions. There is no separate central budget.

Stem Cells

Jim Dobbin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment has been made of the safety of the medium used to preserve embryonic stem cells. [213450]

Ms Rosie Winterton: To date, most human embryonic stem cell lines have been cultured for laboratory research using nutritional support from animal cells. It is therefore not surprising that a recent United States study has demonstrated that many of the human embryonic stem cell lines, which can be used in federally-funded research in the US, are contaminated with a molecule from animal cells. As with any contaminated therapeutic product, these cells could never be used for clinical applications.

Unlike the situation in the US, United Kingdom legislation permits the generation of new embryonic stem cell lines. UK researchers are well aware of the problem of animal contamination and are actively working on developing new embryonic stem cell lines, which have been grown without using animal products.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211338]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not have a Welsh language scheme.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Adviser Discretion Fund

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of Jobcentre Plus clients have received grants from the Adviser Discretion Fund, broken down by benefit received. [214631]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available as Adviser Discretion Fund data are collected on an award, not customer, basis.

It is not possible to equate the number of awards made with the number of customers who have received one as a Jobcentre Plus customer may access the Adviser Discretion Fund on more than one occasion.

Benefit Payments

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's policy is regarding the payment of benefits to claimants of working age who fail to supply account details to his Department. [207791]

Mr. Pond: Direct Payment into an account is the normal method of payment for benefits and pensions and will be the best option for the overwhelming majority of our customers, giving them a more modern and reliable method of payment, with greater choice about where and when they collect their money. Using a bank account also helps jobseekers show employers that they are job ready.

The Department has always recognised that some customers will be unable to be paid in this way and the cheque payment was developed for the small minority of customers who cannot manage Direct Payment.

We are continuing to contact existing customers to invite them to provide account details. However at the end of this process customers, including those of working age, who have not provided account details. will be paid by cheque if possible after we have verified their address and confirmed there is no doubt about ongoing entitlement.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed unemployment benefit in each constituency in Wales for the latest period in which figures are available. [213538]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

JSA caseloads in each parliamentary constituency in Wales: August 2004

Parliamentary constituency	*All*	*Contribution-based only*	*Income-based*	*Credits only*
Aberavon	1,000	[1]200	700	[1]100
Alyn and Deeside	1,000	[1]100	700	[1]100
Blaenau Gwent	1,400	[1]300	1,000	[1]100
Brecon and Radnorshire	600	[1]100	[1]400	[1]100
Bridgend	800	[1]200	600	[2]—
Caernarfon	700	[1]100	500	[1]100
Caerphilly	1,700	[1]300	1,400	[1]100
Cardiff Central	1,200	[1]200	900	[1]100
Cardiff North	600	[1]200	[1]300	[1]100
Cardiff South and Penarth	1,600	[1]200	1,300	[1]100
Cardiff West	1,400	[1]100	1,100	[1]200
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	600	[1]100	[1]400	[1]100
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	800	[1]100	600	[1]100
Ceredigion	1,000	[1]100	800	[1]100
Clwyd South	800	[1]100	600	[1]100
Clwyd West	[1]400	[1]100	[1]300	[2]—
Conwy	900	[1]100	600	[1]100
Cynon Valley	1,000	[1]200	800	[2]—
Delyn	900	[1]200	600	[1]100
Gower	700	[1]200	500	[2]—
Islwyn	900	[1]200	700	[1]100
Llanelli	800	[1]100	600	[1]100
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	[1]300	[1]100	[1]100	[1]100
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	1,300	[1]100	1,100	[1]100
Monmouth	700	[1]100	500	[1]100
Montgomeryshire	[1]400	[1]100	[1]200	[2]—
Neath	1,200	[1]200	900	[1]100
Newport East	1,100	[1]200	800	[1]100
Newport West	1,400	[1]200	1,100	[1]100
Ogmore	800	[1]200	600	[2]—
Pontypridd	1,200	[1]300	800	[1]100
Preseli Pembrokeshire	1,200	[1]100	800	[1]200
Rhondda	1,100	[1]100	800	[1]100
Swansea East	1,600	[1]200	1,200	[1]200
Swansea West	1,400	[1]100	1,200	[1]100
Torfaen	800	[1]100	700	[1]100
Vale of Clwyd	900	[1]100	700	[1]100
Vale of Glamorgan	1,400	[1]200	900	[1]200
Wrexham	800	[1]100	600	[1]100
Ynys Mon	1,300	[1]200	1,000	[1]100

[1] Numbers are based on very few sample cases and are subject to a high degree of sampling variation. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

[2] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
4. Income-based JSA figures include claimants who would also be entitled to the contributory element.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what evidence his Department has relied upon to conclude that over 90 per cent. of pension and benefit claimants in the UK are satisfied with direct payment; and what customer feedback was sought in Scotland to determine preferences on payment methods. [211995]

Mr. Pond: DWP published independent research on customers' experience of Direct Payment on 24 September 2004. Among the findings was that 93 per cent. of those surveyed were happy with the process of having payments made into an account. A copy of the research report is in the Library.

The research covered the views and experiences of a representative group of customers across the whole of Great Britain, including Scotland.

Note:

DWP published independent research on customers' experience of Direct Payment on 24 September 2004 refers to: In-house Report 150—"Customer experience of Direct Payment".

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimated saving will result from the switch of payments of pensions from payment books to direct payments; and what estimated reduction in the level of fraud will result from the phasing out of payment books. [207307]

Mr. Pond: Paying people by order book costs the taxpayer a significant amount of money. The move to Direct Payment provides a modern, secure and efficient system and will reduce administrative costs. Cutting unnecessary expenditure on administrative costs releases money for other priorities.

Overall, significant savings to DWP are expected to accrue from both a reduction in administration costs of around £440 million per annum and a reduction in fraud of around £50 million per annum—against this there will be some additional costs for the Post Office card account; the precise costs will depend on customer choice and how many Post Office card accounts are opened.

With regard to the level of fraud, about 100 pensioners a week had their order books stolen. This risk has been steadily reducing as pensioners and other customers move to Direct Payment.

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Health and Safety Commission's recommendations regarding gas safety in relation to *(a)* the introduction of a levy on gas suppliers to fund a publicity campaign about the dangers of carbon monoxide gas and *(b)* requiring emergency service providers to provide suitably trained and equipped operatives to perform the flue gas analysis are due to be implemented; and if he will make a statement. [210084]

Jane Kennedy: Agreement has been reached with the Energy Retail Association (which represents the top six gas suppliers) to fund voluntarily a national gas safety strategy to include publicity about the dangers of carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

The Gas Emergency Service Provider (Transco) is currently piloting the use of Flue Gas Analysers to trace CO. The pilot follows research into the use of the device, which was jointly funded by Government and the industry. A decision to implement this recommendation must take account of the results of that pilot, and also considerations such as effectiveness, costs, benefits and practical viability.

Carers

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many carers in Stoke-on-Trent are in receipt of both the carer's premium and the basic state pension. [212298]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 August 2004, the most recent date for which figures are available, approximately 500 recipients of pension credit in Stoke-on-Trent, who were in receipt of the extra amount payable to carers, were also in receipt of basic state pension.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions

Note:

The figure, rounded up to the nearest hundred, is based on a 5 per cent. sample and is subject to a high degree of sampling variation. It should be used as a guide only.

Child Support Agency

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the current time scale for handling new applications for child support. [210131]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Miss Anne McIntosh, dated 7 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, if he will make a statement on the current timescale for handling new applications for child support.

As I have previously indicated to the Work and Pensions Select Committee on 17 November 2004, the average time for handling a case, up to the stage where the maintenance assessment is calculated, is currently between 15 to 22 weeks.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of whether the Child Support Agency has sufficient clerical resources to deal with the backlog of cases transferred from the old to the new systems. [210246]

Mr. Pond: The staffing requirements of the Child Support Agency form part of the Spending Review planning process. We will take into account the agency's current and anticipated case load when deciding on the staffing levels that will be allocated to it up to 31 March 2008.

On 26 January 2004, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, announced that we will protect front-line resources by ensuring no major reduction in frontline Child Support Agency staff numbers until the new computer system is working effectively.

We will make a decision on the transfer of old scheme cases once we are sure that the new scheme is working well and its IT is robust.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases are being dealt with by the Child Support Agency at the Falkirk Centre; how many of these cases are being dealt with under the new system; and how many old scheme cases remain on the old computer system. [212022]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Doug Smith to Mrs. Annabelle Ewing, dated 7 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many cases are being dealt with by the Child Support Agency at the Falkirk Centre; how many of these cases are being dealt with under the new legislation; and how many old scheme cases remain on the old computer system.

I am able to tell you that the number of cases within the Scotland and North Eastern business unit, based in Falkirk, is over 235,000. Of these cases over 102,000 have been registered on the new computer system; approximately 61,000 of these cases are being dealt with under the new legislation and 41,000 under the old legislation. In addition around 133,000 are currently old scheme cases on the old computer system.

Civil Service Salaries

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average annual increase in gross salary was for the year 2003–04 for *(a)* staff below the Senior Civil Service and *(b)* the Senior Civil Service in his Department. [208110]

Maria Eagle: The average annual increase in gross salary in DWP for the year 2003–04 was 5 per cent. for staff in grades below the Senior Civil Service, and 2.65 per cent. for staff in the Senior Civil Service.

Notes:

1. Data source: DWP "Dataview" for September 2003 and September 2004 extracted from FAMIS and Rebus payroll systems.
2. The figures represent all staff in DWP, including those in the corporate centre, Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, Child Support Agency, and the Disability and Carer Service.
3. The figures are based on basic full-time, not pro-rated for any working patterns and exclude allowances, overtime, bonuses and employer's national insurance and superannuation liabilities.
4. The percentage growth has been calculated by dividing the increases in mean salaries into the September 2003 mean salaries.

Contract Awards

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much; over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211621]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions continues to award business to EDS under its Accord and ITPA PFI contracts, both of which were subject to competition and were signed in 1999 and 1998 respectively.

During the last two years business has been awarded to:

EDS:

Pension Credit Front End (awarded under Accord) to a total value of £41.8 million, for the period 1 February 2003 to 31 March 2006.

Fujitsu:

Application Hosting and Associated Operational—the initial component of this being an Enterprise Resource Planning system. The contract was awarded following a competition which was advertised in the *Official Journal of the European Union* and has an estimated value of £27 million over five years.

Advisory Services to Fujitsu (under Accord) to a value of £0.37 million, of which £0.177 million during 2003 and £0.194 million in 2004.

Real Time Pensions Forecasting design and development contract awarded to Fujitsu following a competition under the Accord framework. The contract runs from December 2003 to September 2004 and has an estimated value of £4.654 million. An application maintenance contract for this system has also been awarded to Fujitsu running from September 2004 until March 2006 with an estimated value of £0.592 million.

No new contracts have been awarded jointly between EDS and Fujitsu within the last two years.

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners were in receipt of council tax benefit in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Great Britain in (i) each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05 and (ii) each of the last 12 months; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the council tax benefit take-up campaign launched by his Department and the Local Government Association in 2004. [210608]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the following table.

Council tax benefit beneficiaries aged 60 and over in Great Britain, England, Wales and Scotland: May 1997 to 2003

May	*England*	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Great Britain*
1997	2,714,000	156,000	358,000	3,229,000
1998	2,639,000	161,000	369,000	3,169,000
1999	2,560,000	154,000	361,000	3,075,000
2000	2,429,000	156,000	332,000	2,917,000
2001	2,397,000	157,000	336,000	2,891,000
2002	2,339,000	155,000	340,000	2,834,000
2003	2,337,000	154,000	324,000	2,815,000

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest thousand and are subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Council tax benefit figures exclude second adult rebates.
4. "Beneficiaries" are all claimants and partners aged 60 or over.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Annual 1 per cent. sample.

Research was commissioned to establish the general levels of awareness of council tax benefit and to identify the effect of the publicity campaign. The research was conducted at both pre and post stages of the publicity activity. Overall, the research suggested that this activity had a positive effect in raising levels of awareness among our primary target audience of pensioners. Those respondents aged 65 plus were more likely than other age groups to have seen or heard something about paying less council tax, and this increased from 19 per cent. at the pre-publicity stage to 29 per cent. at the post-publicity stage.

In a recent survey, over 90 per cent. of authorities that responded said that they had introduced initiatives that overlapped with, or were as a result of, the council tax benefit campaign. And around two thirds of authorities said that this had resulted in an overall increase in case load.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213262]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

Freedom of Information

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what categories of information are available under Freedom of Information legislation that have not been provided in written parliamentary answers by his Department in the last three years. [207820]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Constitutional Affairs on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 140W.

Health and Safety

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Health and Safety Commission and Executive spent on inspecting local authorities in the most recent year for which figures are available. [211942]

Jane Kennedy: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), is the body through which the Health and Safety Commission's (HSC) delivers its enforcement responsibilities. For 2003–04, which is the most recent year for which figures are available, HSE spent[1] £0.9 million on inspecting local authorities; and £1.1 million on other regulatory activities targeted at enforcing and improving health and safety standards in local authorities.

[1] Expenditure rounded to the nearest 100,000

Incapacity Benefit/Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Blyth Valley are claiming *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* incapacity benefit. [214205]

Maria Eagle: As at 31 August 2004 there were 6,100 people claiming incapacity benefits and 5,000 people in receipt of disability living allowance in the Blyth Valley parliamentary constituency.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Incapacity benefits includes incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance, and incapacity benefit credits-only cases.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. data.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the reasons for the growth in the number of credits-only incapacity benefit recipients; and if he will commission research into this area. [214512]

Maria Eagle: The main reason for the growth in the number of incapacity benefit credits-only claimants is that new claims continue to exceed off flows.

The Department is commissioning research into the routes onto incapacity benefit which will include credits-only customers.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the overall level of expenditure was on *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disablement allowance in each year from 1997–98 to 2005–06, at current prices. [214517]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the tables.

£ million (nominal terms)

	Incapacity benefit	*Severe disablement allowance*
1997–98	7,412	999
1998–99	7,251	984
1999–2000	6,790	1,006
2000–01	6,766	1,014
2001–02	6,749	1,040
2002–03	6,758	958
2003–04	6,718	932
2004–05	6,746	892
2005–06	6,839	857

£ million (Real terms 2004–05 prices)

	Incapacity benefit	*Severe disablement allowance*
1997–98	8,772	1,182
1998–99	8,340	1,132
1999–2000	7,644	1,133
2000–01	7,530	1,129
2001–02	7,324	1,128
2002–03	7,095	1,005
2003–04	6,861	952
2004–05	6,746	892
2005–06	6,670	836

Independent Living Fund

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate his Department has made of the cost of removing the means test from the Independent Living Fund; and if he will make a statement. [213477]

Maria Eagle: No estimate has been made of the cost of removing the means test from the Independent Living Fund. Insufficient data are held to make such an estimate reliable.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213634]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security, and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment including the Employment Service. Information on costs prior to 2002–03 is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Department for Work and Pensions produces more than one in-house magazine. The total amounts spent on the production of in-house magazines by all parts of the Department are in the table.

	£
2002–03	1,387,588
2003–04	1,165,171
2004–05	546,413

Medical Services Ltd.

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what Welsh language requirements there are on Medical Services Ltd. in respect of services that they provide to the Department. [213247]

Maria Eagle: Medical Services are contractually obliged to ensure that all services provided to customers in Wales are available in both Welsh and English languages.

New Deal

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have been assisted into work in Easington constituency under the New Deal since 1997. [214455]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the table.

New Deal in the Easington constituency

Programme	*Individuals into work*
New Deal for Young People	1,250
New Deal 25 plus	380
New Deal for Lone Parents	750
New Deal 50 plus	130
Total	2,510

Notes:

1. New Deal for Young People information is from January 1998 to September 2004.
2. New Deal 25 plus information is from July 1998 to September 2004.
3. New Deal for Lone Parents information is from October 1998 to September 2004.
4. New Deal 50 plus information is from April 2000 to March 2003 and relates to the number of people who received the New Deal 50 plus employment credit.
5. New Deal 50 plus data is not available at constituency level after March 2003.
6. New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners data is not available at constituency level.
7. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have benefited from the New Deal in North Durham since its inception. [214683]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the table.

New Deal in the North Durham constituency

	Number
New Deal for Young People	
Individual starts	1,860
Individuals into work	1,260
New Deal 25 plus	
Individual starts	1,060
Individuals into work	470
New Deal for Lone Parents	
Individual starts	1,150
Individuals into work	710
New Deal 50 plus	
Individuals into work	220

Notes:

1. New Deal for Young People information is from January 1998 to September 2004.
2. New Deal 25 plus information is from July 1998 to September 2004.
3. New Deal for Lone Parents information is from October 1998 to September 2004.
4. New Deal 50 plus information is from April 2000 to March 2003 and relates to the number of people who received the New Deal 50 plus employment credit.
5. New Deal 50 plus data are not available at constituency level after March 2003.
6. New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners data are not available at constituency level.
7. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Database, DWP Information Directorate.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have started each of the New Deal for Employment programmes in *(a)* Stockton and *(b)* Stockton, South; and how many have entered work as a result. [214721]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is in the table.

New Deal in Stockton

	Stockton		*Stockton, South*	
	Individual starts	*Individuals gaining a job*	*Individual starts*	*Individuals gaining a job*
New Deal for Young People	4,970	3,070	2,110	1,330
New Deal 25 plus	2,270	800	920	340
New Deal for Lone Parents	2,380	1,470	920	570
New Deal 50 plus	390	390	190	190
Total	10,010	5,730	4,130	2,440

Notes:

1. Information for Stockton consists of data for the Stockton, North and Stockton, South constituencies.
2. New Deal for Young People data are from January 1998 to September 2004.
3. New Deal 25 plus data are from July 1998 to September 2004.
4. New Deal for Lone Parents data are from October 1998 to September 2004.
5. New Deal 50 plus data relate to the number of people who received the New Deal 50 plus Employment Credit up to March 2003.
6. New Deal 50 plus data are not available at constituency level after March 2003.
7. New Deal for Disabled People and New Deal for Partners information is not available at constituency level.
8. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason components may not sum to totals.

Source:

Information Directorate, DWP

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living in the Greater London area have gained work through the New Deal for Lone Parents. [215165]

Jane Kennedy: The available information is that 28,820 people in the London Jobcentre Plus region have gained work through the New Deal for Lone Parents since the start of the programme in October 1998.

Non-geographic Telephone Numbers

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the use of non-geographic 0870 and 0845 telephone numbers by his Department and its agencies. [214052]

Maria Eagle: The Whistleblowers Hotline is a confidential service available to Department for Work and Pensions staff and is the only 0870 number in use.

Non-geographic 0870 numbers are not used by customers to contact the Department or its Agencies.

All Department for Work and Pensions contact centres for customers operate on 0845 (local rate) or 0800 (free) phone numbers.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much revenue his Department and its agencies received from the use of *(a)* 0870 and *(b)* 0845 telephone numbers in the last year for which figures are available. [214053]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions and its agencies do not receive any revenue for the use of 0845 numbers.

For information regarding 0870 numbers I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler) on 17 January 2005, *Official Report,* column 780W.

Pensions

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the annual cost of administering *(a)* the pension credit and *(b)* the basic state pension; and what the administration costs are as a proportion of the total benefits paid out under (i) pension credit and (ii) basic state pension. [211372]

Malcolm Wicks: Information is not currently available in the format requested. In accordance with the requirements of resource accounting and budgeting, the Department now accounts for its administration and benefit expenditure by strategic objective, as set out in its Public Service Agreements (PSA), and by individual requests for resources (RfRs), as set out in the departmental estimates and accounts.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps pensioners need to take to continue to receive their pension payments over the counter at post offices; and if he will make a statement. [214810]

Mr. Pond: Pensioners who are contacted about the move to Direct Payment are provided with information on all the account options open to them, including those accounts which can be accessed at post offices. There are now a wide range of new, easy to operate accounts such as current accounts and basic bank accounts, in addition to the Post Office card account, which allow pensioners to get their money at a post office. The small number of people who cannot be paid directly into an account will be paid by cheque, which is cashable at post offices.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Stoke-on-Trent and *(b)* England have indicated that they wish to continue to collect their pensions at post offices. [211711]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the form requested. Information on methods of payment of state pension is given in the following table. Some of those customers who have opted to be paid directly into a bank or building society account will be able to collect cash from their account at a post office. It is not possible to identify these separately.

State pension accounts broken down by method of payment

	England	*Stoke-on-Trent*
All accounts	7,992,410	36,675
Payments paid into bank or building society accounts	5,669,280	19,075
Payments paid into Post Office card accounts	740,990	6,860
Accounts paid by cheque	1,150	25
Accounts paid by order book	1,565,140	10,675
Other payments	15,855	35

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five and might not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures are taken from the latest available data at 27 November 2004
3. Figures relate to accounts rather than recipients; if a person is receiving their state pension through a different benefit they will not be included in the above figures.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people of pensionable age in Stoke-on-Trent do not receive *(a)* the full basic state pension and *(b)* part of the basic state pension as a result of their contribution records. [212299]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. However, such information as is available for the local authority area of Stoke on-Trent is in the table:

	Number
People of state pension age in receipt of:	
A basic state pension at less than the full rate	13,200
A state pension but no basic state pension	300

Notes:

1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation. The figure for the number of people in receipt of a state pension but no basic state pension should only be taken as indicative.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A basic state pension is paid to those who fully or partially satisfy the contribution conditions for a category A or category B pension.
4. Full rate means £77.45 for a basic state pension in 2003–04.

5. People shown as in receipt of a state pension but no basic state pension are in receipt of a category D pension or either or both graduated retirement benefit and additional state pension.
6. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March 2004

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals were in receipt of *(a)* basic state pension and *(b)* over-80s pension in Southend-on-Sea in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2004. [213202]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is not available in the format requested. However, such information as is available is in the table:

Local authority area of Southend-on-Sea

	Number of individuals receiving:	
March	*Basic state pension*	*Category D pension*
2000	33,300	100
2004	33,200	100

Notes:
1. Figures are taken from a 5 per cent. sample and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation. Figures for category D pensions should only be taken as indicative.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A basic state pension is paid to those who fully or partially satisfy the contribution conditions for a category A or category B pension.
4. Figures for recipients of basic state pension exclude those receiving category C or category D pension only, additional state pension only or graduated retirement benefit only.
5. Figures for category D pensions include those who get a category D pension alone or in addition to a basic State Pension that is lower than the level of the Category D Pension—£46.35 in 2003–04.
6. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
7. Local authority data are not available prior to March 2000.
Source:
IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample as at 31 March for the years shown.

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on state pension entitlement of British citizens who move abroad; [213212]

(2) if he will make it his policy to ensure the equal treatment of all British pensioners resident abroad in relation to updating of state retirement pensions. [213326]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK state pension is payable in all countries abroad to those who are entitled to it. It is uprated in the normal way for pensioners living abroad where there is a legal requirement or a reciprocal social security agreement to do so.

However, the uprating of state pensions outside this arrangement is the subject of an appeal to the House of Lords from a decision of the Court of Appeal which found in favour of the Government. We will respond accordingly at the hearing which is set for 28 February and 1 March this year.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many reports of computer failure his Department has received since the introduction of pension and benefit payment through the Post Office card account. [205460]

Mr. Pond *[holding answer 20 December 2004]*: Computer faults are reported on a daily basis, examples include faults with individual PC's, system problems affecting individual claims and, on occasion, the unavailability of computer systems such as income support.

If it can be defined to what level the information is required and in particular which systems e.g. pensions, income support that the information is required for, then data held since introduction of the payment through Post Office card account (April 2003) may be trawled to identify specific incidents.

What we can provide at present is information relating to any payments which have been received late by the customer due to IT problems. Details, as follows:

8 May 2003 (Income Support) value £11, 756,334.00

29 December 2003 (Child Benefit) value £475,192.00

31 December 2003 (Pensions) value £4,337,200.00

18 March 2004 (Income Support Northern Ireland) £837,899.00

6 and 7 April 2004 (Disability Living Allowance) value £15,000,000.00

The total value of late payments is £32,415,625.00. The total value of all payments since April 2003 is approximately £180,148,321,883.00. Therefore, the proportion of payments received late by customers is 0.02 per cent.

However, none of the late payment incidents were as a result of system unavailability. The problem occurred due to coding within the systems themselves.

Pensioners' Benefits

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* recipients of the state pension, *(b)* individuals eligible for a free television licence, *(c)* pension credit claimants and *(d)* recipients of winter fuel payments there were in the Nottingham, North constituency on the latest date for which figures are available. [211007]

Malcolm Wicks: As of 31 March 2004, the number of people in receipt of a state pension in the Nottingham, North constituency was 15,500.

The information for those eligible for a free television licence in the Nottingham, North constituency is not available in the format requested. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment (who would be eligible for a free TV licence) in the Nottingham, North constituency in 2003–04 was 5,330.

As of 31 December 2004, there were 5,655 households, comprising 6,925 individuals, in receipt of pension credit in the Nottingham, North Constituency.

Information on the number of winter fuel payments made in each constituency is available in the Library.

Notes:
1. The state pension figure is based on a 5 per cent. sample and is therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. The state pension figure is rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. State pension figures is for all people getting a state pension i.e. a category A, B, C or D state pension or graduated retirement benefit.
4. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.

5. Pension credit figures are rounded to the nearest five.
6. Individual recipients of pension credit include a small number of partners under age 60.

Source:
IAD Information Centre

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213671]

Jane Kennedy: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2002. The available information is as follows:

The cost of the departmental staff survey (excluding consultancy costs) was £249,000 in 2002 and £136,000 in 2003. The survey cycle for 2004 is not yet complete, but costs are estimated at £130,000. All surveys have been available to all individuals within the Department, with responses ranging from 74,000 to 77,000 completed questionnaires. Data reports are made available not only at departmental and business level, but for over 500 different operational units, allowing improvement actions to be identified at both national and local levels. Reports detailing the breakdown of demographic data allow monitoring of the effectiveness of diversity and equality policies and targets.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals were in receipt of *(a)* winter fuel payments and *(b)* over-80s annual payments in Southend-on-Sea in (i) 1980, (ii) 1990, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2004. [213127]

Malcolm Wicks: Winter fuel payments were introduced in the winter of 1997–98. Information on the number of winter fuel payments and 80 plus annual payments made in Southend-on-Sea in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will investigate the number of winter fuel payments that have not been received by pensioners in Hendon; and if he will make a statement. [214522]

Malcolm Wicks: Winter fuel payments (WFPs) were issued between 6 November 2004 and 6 December 2004. Data regarding the total number of payments issued for the Hendon area is not available. The Pension Service has received 52 notifications of non-receipt of WFP from customers residing in this area. Of these customers, 38 have received replacement payments and the remaining 14 will have payments issued by 11 February 2005.

Royal Mail have advised that there has been no reported bulk loss in the area.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Stoke-on-Trent have been in receipt of winter fuel payments in each of the last seven years. [213064]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of winter fuel payments made in Stoke-on-Trent in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* average, *(b)* shortest and *(c)* longest time taken to make winter fuel payments between application and payment has been in (i) the UK, (ii) Scotland and (iii) each constituency in each of the last six years. [213140]

Malcolm Wicks: Over 11.2 million people entitled to winter fuel payments (approximately 98 per cent.) were paid without having to make a claim. Their payments, with all payments to those who had claimed by 12 November 2004, were sent to them before Christmas as planned. Others, including those who claim before the cut-off date, will be paid in one of the three remaining payment runs which commence in February.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were eligible for winter fuel payments in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* each constituency in each of the last six years. [213141]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of people who were eligible for winter fuel payments. Information on the number of winter fuel payments made in Great Britain, Scotland and each constituency in each year for which figures are available is in the Library. Payments made in Northern Ireland are a matter for my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many households in Northavon constituency *(a)* were eligible for and *(b)* received winter fuel payments in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [213506]

Malcolm Wicks: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of households that were eligible for a winter fuel payment. Information on the number of households in Northavon that received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 is in the Library. Information on winter 2004–05 is not yet available but we expect the number to be similar.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to extend the winter fuel allowance to pensioners paying for residential care home accommodation. [213747]

Malcolm Wicks: Pensioners paying for residential care home accommodation for themselves are eligible for winter fuel payments unless they receive pension credit.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 8 February 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Big Lottery Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the Big Lottery Fund. [214828]

Estelle Morris: The Big Lottery Fund was launched on 1 June 2004 following the administrative merger of the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the Community Fund. The National Lottery Bill, currently before Parliament, will establish one new body, which will replace the two existing Funds and the Millennium Commission and have responsibility for distributing half the money for good causes from the National Lottery. The Big Lottery Fund will build on the achievements of NOF and the Community Fund, but will be a genuinely new body. There will be much more opportunity to involve the public in priority setting, getting local people actively involved in improving life in their communities.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [213258]

Mr. Caborn: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, my right hon. Friend the Member for Brent, South (Mr. Boateng) on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

Lottery Money (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery money has been granted to Derian House Children's Hospice in Chorley. [214000]

Estelle Morris: In 2003 Derian House Children's Hospice in Chorley received two awards from the then New Opportunities Fund, £380,914 and the other of £649,971.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much lottery money has been granted in the Chorley constituency in *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2004–05; and to which schemes. [213999]

Estelle Morris: The table shows how much money the constituency of Chorley was awarded in the following years.

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Arts Council England	15,080	10,085	19,190
Awards For All (England) Joint Scheme	121,626	169,885	153,728
Community Fund	623,418	477,950	200,804
Heritage Lottery Fund	7,786	228,632	7,900
New Opportunities Fund	2,274,185	3,421,021	25,019
Sport England	27,000	0	0
UK Film Council	0	0	5,000
Grand total	3,069,095	4,307,573	411,641

This information is freely available from the Department's searchable Lottery award database at www.lottery.culture.gsi.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors. The figures for 2004 are not yet final due to lags in the reporting process.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many lottery applications from the Chorley constituency are awaiting decision. [214[illegible]01]

Estelle Morris: Applications from the constituency of Chorley are awaiting decision from the following distributing bodies:

Distributing body	*Application*
Awards for All	10
Big Lottery Fund	6
Sport England	3
UK Film Council	2
Heritage Lottery Fund	2

Swimming Baths (Parental Supervision)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent representations she has received on the rules for parental supervision of children in public swimming baths. [215279]

Mr. Caborn: The Department has received a number of letters from members of the public and from hon. Members of Parliament, who have been contacted by their constituents, asking the Government to examine this issue.

The guidance has been introduced by the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM) to improve safety at swimming pools. The degree to which it is applied is ultimately a decision for the owners and operators of individual swimming pools to make. However, it is clear that the guidance is being rigidly applied in many cases and that some pool operators are not recognising the flexibility contained within it.

The Department will host a meeting on Friday 11 February 2005 with the ISRM and other interested parties to explore how we can encourage the adoption of a common sense approach when applying the guidance.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who has been invited to the meeting promised by the Prime Minister during his visit to Kent to Ms Carolyn Warner of the Right to Swim Pressure Group; and when the meeting is scheduled to take place. [215280]

Mr. Caborn: The meeting is scheduled to take place at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on Friday 11 February 2005.

Representatives from the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management, the Health and Safety Executive, the Local Government Association the Amateur Swimming Association and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents will attend the meeting along with Carolyn Warner and officials from the DCMS.

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many children have drowned in public swimming pools in each of the last five years. [215281]

Mr. Caborn: According to latest available statistics provided by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the following number of children (16-years of age or under) have died in the past five years:

	Number of children
1999	3
2000	5
2001	5
2002	5
2003	4

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Angling

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with interested parties in respect of the use of rivers by anglers and cormorants. [213248]

Mr. Bradshaw: I regularly meet and have ad hoc discussions with interested parties with regard to the use of rivers by anglers and cormorants. Most recently I met with anglers representatives at the 4th National Angling Summit on 2 February, when the issue of cormorants was discussed.

Biodiversity

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on biodiversity in the UK of allowing free trade in agricultural products. [212128]

Mr. Bradshaw: The impacts of free trade in agricultural products on biodiversity will be largely determined by the subsequent business decisions made by farmers. Prior to reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, production decisions were influenced by the subsidy regime. To monitor and evaluate the impacts of changes in farmers' production decisions, Defra will establish a range of improved monitoring processes including an 'observatory' function. This will look at the environmental impacts of the reforms as a result of changes in farm practices and production levels. We have commissioned a scoping study to help us define this function and are currently considering options for delivering it.

Bovine TB

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the change in incidence of bovine TB in cattle has been since 1999. [211906]

Mr. Bradshaw: The incidence of TB in cattle herds in Great Britain is measured as the percentage of tests on unrestricted herds resulting in a confirmed breakdown. The latest figures for the change in incidence is given in the following table.

	Confirmed new incidents as a percentage of tests on unrestricted herds
1 January–30 November 2004[1]	3.24
1 January–31 December 2003	3.48
1 January–31 December 2002[2]	4.25
1 January–31 December 2001[3]	4.54
1 January–31 December 2000	2.76
1 January–31 December 1999	2.26

[1] In 2001, the TB testing and control programme was largely suspended due to the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak. When testing resumed in 2002, resources were concentrated on herds with overdue TB tests which would have had a longer period in which to contract the disease. Also the proportion of high risk herds tested immediately after the FMD outbreak was greater than that prior to the outbreak.

[2] The data for 2002 are therefore, also not comparable with other years.

[3] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service Data Warehouse on 17–21 January 2005. Subject to change as more data become available.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent estimate she has made of how much the Common Agricultural Policy costs an average sized family in *(a)* increased food prices and *(b)* taxes. [212133]

Alun Michael: The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) raises the price of agricultural products to consumers, though the specific effect will vary over time according to conditions in world markets and exchange rates. We can make an estimate of the cost of the CAP to consumers by comparing the domestic price of agricultural products with the world price. Our latest provisional estimate is for 2003 and this shows a cost to UK consumers in the range £4.50 to £5, per family of four, per week.

The UK does not contribute to individual EU budget categories, rather it contributes to the entire EU budget. In order to provide an indication of the cost to UK taxpayers we have calculated a notional UK contribution to expenditure on the CAP. In 2003 we estimate this to have been around £5, per family of four, per week.

It remains the Government's objective to bring the down the cost of the CAP to taxpayers and consumers.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [213268]

Alun Michael: Plan figures for departmental unallocated provision in 2005–06 were published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2004–05, Supplementary Budget Information (Cm 6133). Plan figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be published in Central Government Supply Estimates 2005–06, Supplementary Budget Information.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how she will apply the single payment scheme to areas of common land, broken down by appropriate registration schemes for the land. [211893]

Alun Michael: We announced the way in which farmers with common land rights may apply under the single payment scheme in December last year. Details are available on the Defra website and will soon be sent to all farmers in another policy update brochure. We shall be considering applications from farmers by 16 May who have agricultural rights to common land in calculating the allocation of entitlements under the single payment scheme. In the majority of cases, these rights will have been registered under The Registration of Commons Act 1965. One exception to that is the New Forest where we are currently consulting with interests to determine what arrangements will apply there.

Fishing Quotas

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* discussions her Department has had with and *(b)* communications have been received from the European Commission since 1998 on the imposition of monthly cod quota allocations for individual vessels operated by under 10 metre PO members exploiting waters in (i) Area VIId and (ii) other areas. [213862]

Mr. Bradshaw: None. Vessels fishing against quota allocations managed by producer organisations (POs) are not subject to monthly catch limits set by fisheries departments but to such catch restrictions as may be imposed by their POs.

Foot and Mouth

Mrs. Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what systems were put in place by her Department to ensure that all relevant evidence was submitted to the Anderson Inquiry into the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2001. [214255]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Defra set up an Inquiries Liaison Unit which was responsible for ensuring that Dr. Anderson's Lessons Learned Inquiry had access to any relevant information it requested relating to the FMD outbreak.

Free Trade

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the economic effects on *(a)* UK consumers and *(b)* the UK economy of allowing free trade in agricultural products. [212134]

Alun Michael: Allowing free trade in agricultural products would eliminate the costs to consumers of higher food prices generated by the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Our latest provisional estimate is for 2003 and this shows a cost to UK consumers in the range £4.50 to £5, per family of four, per week.

Free trade in agricultural products would benefit the UK economy through a more efficient allocation of domestic resources. We have not made our own estimate of the magnitude of the effect; a number of such estimates have been published in academic journals. These estimated costs vary, according to the baseline and methodology used. A recent estimate (along with a review of previous studies) is contained in Philippidis, G., and Hubbard, L.J., (2001), 'The economic cost of the CAP revisited', "Agricultural Economics", 25, 375–385. This puts the economic cost of the CAP at around 0.2 per cent. of GDP for the EU and 0.5 per cent. for the UK. It should be noted that this estimate predates recent reforms, which will reduce the estimated economic costs of the CAP.

The UK Government will continue to argue during the current World Trade Organisation round for further liberalisation of agricultural trade, which will bring economic benefits to both developed and developing countries.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total expenditure by her Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211666]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 20 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 1235W and 3 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 958W. This includes communications on a wide range of matters, much of it necessary or beneficial to the public and the wide range of industries in which Defra has an interest, together with local government, voluntary organisations and other bodies.

Estimated costs for 2004–05 are not yet available and total allocations for advertising and publicity for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 have not yet been made.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what expenditure *(a)* her Department and *(b)* agencies for which her Department is responsible have made on research and development by private sector companies in each financial year since 2001–02. [206992]

Alun Michael: Defra is a major funder of research, currently spending over £150 million pa on research services. The research budget is held within core-Defra. It is spent directly with contractor organisations and not accounted for through any of Defra's Executive Agencies. The figures provided are, therefore, limited to Defra expenditure alone.

Defra R and D expenditure

	£000
2001–02	24,912
2002–03	27,747
2003–04	28,619

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* her Department's expenditure and *(b)* the expenditure of each agency for which she is responsible on research and development relating to UK university departments and research centres in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206996]

Alun Michael: Defra is a major funder of research, currently spending over £150 million per annum on research services. The research budget is held within core-Defra. It is spent directly with contractor organisations and not accounted for through any of Defra's Executive Agencies. The figures provided are, therefore, limited to Defra expenditure alone.

Defra R and D expenditure

	£000
2001–02	18,284
2002–03	16,000
2003–04	17,379

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* her Department and *(b)* each agency for which she is responsible spent on research and development with overseas Government laboratories or research establishments (including collaborative Government funded laboratories and research establishments) in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206998]

Alun Michael: Defra is a major funder of research, currently spending over £150 million per annum on research services. The research budget is held within core-Defra. It is spent directly with contractor organisations and not accounted for through any of Defra's Executive Agencies. The figures provided are, therefore, limited to Defra expenditure alone.

Defra R and D expenditure

	£000
2001–02	12
2002–03	254
2003–04	366

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much and what percentage of the expenditure of each agency sponsored by her Department went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [207003]

Alun Michael: Defra is a major funder of research, currently spending over £150 million per annum on research services. The research budget is held within core-Defra. It is spent directly with contractor organisations and not accounted for through any of Defra's Executive Agencies except in the case of the Pesticides Safety Directorate and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate who together currently manage research funding of £7.6 million per annum on the Departments behalf.

The Executive agencies for which the Department is responsible are the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), Central Science Laboratory (CSL), Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA), Pesticides Safety Directorate (PSD) and the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD). These agencies may be contractors receiving Defra R and D funding, or in the case of PSD and VMD, managers of Defra R and D funding. The figures do not cover research expenditure made by Non-Departmental Public Bodies such as the Environment Agency and the Countryside Agency.

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what expenditure was made by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* agencies for which the Department is responsible on research and development projects undertaken by organisations other than university departments, Government-funded research establishments and private sector companies in each year since 2001–02. [207016]

Alun Michael: Defra is a major funder of research, currently spending over £150 million per annum on research services. The research budget is held within core-Defra. It is spent directly with contractor organisations and not accounted for through any of Defra's Executive Agencies. The figures provided are, therefore, limited to Defra expenditure alone.

Defra R and D expenditure

	£000
2001–02	4,724
2002–03	4,924
2003–04	4,480

SCOTLAND

Economic Growth

8. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what assessment he has made of the future rate of growth of the Scottish economy by comparison with the UK economy. [213407]

Mr. Darling: Future growth prospects are positive. Business surveys are pointing to a continued strengthening of business activity in Scotland. Independent forecasters predict that GDP growth in Scotland will remain above trend into 2005 and 2006, and that the differential between Scotland and the UK will narrow. Since 2001 there have been some signs of convergence, although it is difficult to make firm conclusions in such a short time span.

11. **Mr. Peter Atkinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland, what discussions he has held with *(a)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* the Scottish Executive on prospects for growth in the Scottish economy by comparison with the rest of the UK. [213410]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions on a range of matters with my right hon. Friend the Chancellor and with the Scottish Executive.

Disability Rights

9. **Mr. Tom Clarke:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when he next expects to meet the Scottish representatives of the Disability Rights Commission to discuss disability rights in Scotland. [213408]

Mrs. McGuire: I have met the Disability Rights Commission on a number of occasions in the last year to discuss disability rights in Scotland. I have no immediate plans for another meeting.

Pensioner Poverty

10. **Annabelle Ewing:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with the First Minister about pensioner poverty in Scotland. [213409]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend discusses a wide range of issues with the First Minister. The hon. Lady will be aware that tackling pensioner poverty is one of the key policies of this Government.

Identity Cards

12. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has made of the costs of introducing identity cards in Scotland. [213411]

Mrs. McGuire: My hon. Friend, the Minister for Citizenship and Immigration at the Home Office, set out forecast costs of introducing an identity cards scheme in his answer to the hon. Member for Edinburgh, West (John Barrett) on 20 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1901.

The costs of issuing identity cards to people living in Scotland have not been identified separately.

Small Businesses

13. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the level of central Government regulation of small businesses in Scotland. [213412]

Mr. Darling: I regularly meet Cabinet colleagues to discuss a wide range of issues. The Government are committed to eliminating unnecessary regulations affecting all businesses and works with all stakeholders, including the European Commission, the Scottish Executive, enforcement authorities, as well as small businesses themselves, to achieve this.

14. **Mr. Wiggin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many small businesses were created in Scotland during 2004. [213413]

Mr. Darling: Information from the Committee of Scottish Clearing Banks shows 21,468 new business accounts were opened at Scotland's four main clearing banks in 2003. There were 126,560 VAT registered business in Scotland at the start of 2004, the highest level since the present series began in 1994. Data for 2004 is not yet available.

Burns Anniversary

15. **Sandra Osborne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Scottish Executive on using national lottery funding for projects to mark the legacy of Robert Burns, with particular reference to the 250th anniversary of his birth. [213414]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the First Minister on a range of topics. As my hon. Friend will appreciate, decisions on national lottery funding of this kind in Scotland are a matter for Scottish Ministers.

Tax Credit Overpayment

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Treasury on tax credit overpayment in Scotland. [213405]

Mrs. McGuire: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on a range of issues.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Smoking Policy

36. **David Taylor:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what recent developments there have been in the designation of no-smoking areas in the precincts of the House; and if he will make a statement. [214441]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: On 27 January the Commission announced through a notice in the All Party Whip that the House would as from Monday 4 April become smoke-free, save as otherwise provided. A staff notice was issued on the same day. Smoking will continue to be allowed in Refreshment Department bars, except the Strangers' Bar and Terrace Pavilion Bar; it will no longer be allowed in any outlets serving food, including the Members Tea Room.

Environmental Practice

37. **Norman Baker:** To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will instigate an audit of the House's environmental practices. [214442]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: As my hon. Friend will know from my previous answers to him, an environmental survey of the parliamentary estate was carried out in 2004 by the consultants Urban Mines Ltd., and a copy of the report has been placed in the Library. Its detailed recommendations are being taken forward by the Working Group on Recycling and the Energy Savers Group.

Election Artist

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what the cost is of the contract for the provision of the services of an election artist. [214527]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: A number of highly regarded contemporary artists were invited to submit proposals for a work based on the next general election campaign for a fee of £10,000 plus VAT. There are likely to be some additional costs for framing and the artist's travel and subsistence expenses. The Speaker's Advisory Committee on Works of Art selected David Godbold as the successful artist. The costs of the commission will be met from that Committee's acquisition budget.

Postal Services

Mr. Connarty: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission what plans he has to re-examine the recent changes made to postal services in the House. [214445]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: There have in fact been no recent changes to the postal services in the House. The Mail Screening service was the subject of a tender exercise and the contract was awarded to Pitney Bowes with effect from 1 July 2005. A procurement exercise for the Mail Delivery Service, covering behind the scenes sorting and preparation, will be completed later this year.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

English Regions

38. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals to increase opportunities for hon. Members to debate matters affecting the English regions. [214443]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House is open to suggestion on this, as on other matters. In particular, he would be very willing to consider any suggested topics of regional interest suitable for debate in the Standing Committee on Regional Affairs.

Citizenship Syllabus

39. **Ms Coffey:** To ask the Leader of the House what representations he has made to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on giving more emphasis to Parliament in the school citizenship syllabus. [214444]

Mr. Woolas: My right hon. Friend the Leader of the House has drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills the recommendation of the Modernisation Committee, in its report on "Connecting Parliament with the Public", that Ministers re-examine the balance of the citizenship curriculum to ensure that it provides young people with an understanding of Parliament and the political process.

Chartered Aircraft

Chris Grayling: To ask the Leader of the House how much money his Office has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213719]

Mr. Hain: None.

Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Appeal Judges (Training)

28. **Mr. Watts:** To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what advice and training is being provided to appeal judges on implementing new legislation aimed at combating antisocial behaviour and illegal drug use. [214433]

Mr. Leslie: Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board which is an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene. The Judicial Studies Board provides dedicated training on antisocial behaviour issues to civil judges who will hear such cases at first instance and on appeal. Training for judges in the criminal courts, who would hear appeals against sentence in the magistrates courts, include sessions on antisocial behaviour orders and on drug use and offending

Mental Capacity Bill

29. **Mr. Ben Chapman:** To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions he has held with the Archbishop of Cardiff regarding the Mental Capacity Bill. [214434]

Mr. Lammy: My ministerial colleagues and I continue to discuss this important Bill with a very wide range of stakeholders, including the Catholic Church.

On 25 January Clause 4 of the Bill was amended in the other place to fulfil the commitments that I made on Report. The amendment to clause 4 makes it explicit that a desire to bring about a person's death cannot affect the process of determining what is in his best interests.

I am pleased that these amendments have been welcomed in the other place and by Archbishop Peter Smith.

House of Lords Reform

32. **Andy Burnham:** To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs if he

will make a statement on further reform of the House of Lords and indirect elections to that House. [214437]

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs when he plans to bring forward legislation to reform the composition of the House of Lords. [214427]

Mr. Leslie: There continue to be a wide range of views on the proper functions, powers and composition of the House of Lords. We have made it clear that we intend to return to the issue of House of Lords reform in the context of our Manifesto.

County Courts

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Government are taking to enable court cases to be heard more quickly by county courts. [214432]

Mr. Leslie: The Government recognise the need to remove any unnecessary delays in the civil and family courts, especially in vulnerable cases involving child welfare issues. We are aiming to increase the proportion of cases completed in 40 weeks by 10 per cent. in the family proceedings courts over the current spending review period.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213260]

Mr. Lammy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report,* column 910W.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213642]

Mr. Lammy: Costs incurred by my Department for producing in-house magazines are detailed in the following table.

£

	DCA	*Court service*		*Public guardianship office*
	Hearsay 28,000 × 24 page, 4-colour	*Direct brief 12,000 × 8 page, 4-colour*	*UA news (unified administration) 47,000 × 4 page, 2-colour*	*Update 400 × 8 page, photocopy*
1997–98	Accounting system change	—	—	—
1998–99	[1]31,428.69	—	—	—
1999–2000	67,098.72	—	—	—
2000–01	101,279.19	—	—	—
2001–02	108,315.12	—	—	—
2002–03	130,747.80	[2]4,000	—	[2,3]24
2003–04	136,490.34	52,883	[2]19,972.24	[3]672
2004–05	[4]109,680.04	[4]56,000	20,073.69	[4]560

[1] DCA HQ December to March only. Lord Chancellor's Department changed accounting systems in November 1998–99.

[2] First edition.

[3] Photocopying costs only, no editorial, design or print costs as this is produced entirely by the internal communications team

[4] Yield to date

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213791]

Mr. Lammy: The costs of *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department in each year since 1997 are not separately identifiable within the Department's accounts without incurring disproportionate costs.

The Department is committed to providing access to training for staff and developing them to their full potential.

PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Norman Lamb: To ask the Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for North Norfolk of 5 January entitled, Chequers: Parliamentary Ombudsman's Decision. [215065]

The Prime Minister: A reply has been sent. A copy of the reply has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Aerospace Industry (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate she has made of the number of jobs *(a)* in the aerospace industry in Lancashire and *(b)* dependent on the aerospace industry in Lancashire. [212094]

Jacqui Smith: In 2003 there were 17,622 employees working in SIC 353 (manufacture of aircraft and spacecraft) in Lancashire, including the unitary authorities of Blackpool and Blackburn with Darwen[1]. No estimates have been made of jobs, wherever located, dependent on the aerospace industry in Lancashire.

[1] *Source:*
National Statistics, NOMIS.

Corruption

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the potential impact of reducing international trade barriers on reducing corruption in developing countries. [212131]

Mr. Alexander: None. However, a number of international organisations have examined the theoretical links between trade barriers and corruption, and a 1998 empirical study by the OECD Development Centre, entitled "Determinants of Customs Fraud and Corruption: Evidence from Two African Countries," concluded that

> "protectionist trade policies promote customs fraud by increasing the incentive for private citizens to engage in illegal behaviour and for government officials to abuse their office for personal, pecuniary gain."

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213614]

Ms Hewitt: The information is as follows:

(a) The Department has a total of two staff restaurants and four cafe style outlets in three buildings.

(b) The Department has no bars serving alcoholic beverages.

Operation of these facilities is through an outside contractor. In 1996–07, the direct cost to the Department was about £325,000 in terms of a subsidy; since June 2000, they have operated on a nil subsidy basis with no direct costs to the Department. Figures for the years between 1997 and 2000 are not available.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the annual cost of consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department was since 1997. [213653]

Ms Hewitt: In line with Investors in People good practice for employers, the Department commissions regular opinion surveys of its employees on matters relating to their jobs.

The Department has contracted-out the conducting of its staff survey to external research agencies since 2001–02. Companies are selected via an open competitive tender in line with government procurement rules. Details of costs:

	£000
2001–02	20
2002–03	30
2003–04	39
2004–05	31.5

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213670]

Ms Hewitt: In line with Investors in People good practice for employers, the Department commissions regular opinion surveys of its employees on matters relating to their jobs.

The Department began commissioning staff surveys in 1998. In 1998 and 2000, the surveys were conducted in-house, so costs are not available for these years. Costs for subsequent years were:

	£000
2001–02	20
2002–03	30
2003–04	39
2004–05	31.5

VAT Registrations

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many VAT registrations there have been in Stoke-on-Trent in each year since 1997. [210864]

Nigel Griffiths: There were 445,000 (revised) business start-up in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 396,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 14 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003.

Barclays bank latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were 445,000 (revised) business start-up in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 396,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 14 per cent. on the nine months of 2003. There were 1,100 business start-ups in Stoke-on-Trent Unitary Authority in 2003 and a further 900 in the first nine months of 2004. Business start-up data is available at http://www.barclays.co.uk/business.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidance she plans to issue to the construction industry concerning the application of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive to products used by the construction industry. [214026]

Ms Hewitt: The Government have issued generic guidance on the scope and requirements of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive and remains happy to work with individual sectors on specific points.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what obligations will be placed on business end users discarding their waste electrical and electronic equipment to deliver that equipment to a licensed site where there is no provision for the separate bulking up of the various categories of waste electrical and electronic equipment. [214042]

Ms Hewitt: Equipment covered by the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive and sold on a business to business basis will be the responsibility of the equipment producer at end of life.

unless it was placed on the market before 13 August 2005 and is not being replaced on a like for like basis. In such a case it would become the responsibility of the business user to ensure that it would be treated and recycled in accordance with the Directive, and through the existing Duty of Care legislation.

The Government will be producing practical guidance to producers and business users alike on these obligations.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Tackling Intruders

David Davis: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases have been brought by the Crown Prosecution Service with regard to people tackling intruders in *(a)* residential properties and *(b)* retail properties in each year since 1990. [214321]

The Solicitor-General: Prosecution statistics do not record whether a case involved a householder tackling an intruder. However, an informal survey of the 42 Crown Prosecution Service areas in December 2004 revealed that there were 11 cases prosecuted in the last 15 years. Of these, six concerned residential properties, two concerned commercial properties, two concerned allotment sheds and one concerned private fishing grounds.

Under-age Alcohol Sales

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions were brought by the Crown Prosecution Service in Devon for supplying alcohol to underaged purchasers in 2004; and if she will make a statement. [213986]

The Solicitor-General: Although, the Crown Prosecution Service in Devon and Cornwall has identified one case brought in Devon for supplying alcohol to underaged purchasers in 2004, which was subsequently discontinued due to insufficient evidence, it is not possible to provide accurate statistics as the information is not recorded centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

WALES

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213693]

Mr. Hain: None

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211645]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established July 1999. No costs have been incurred under the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants scheme up to 2003–04, and it is not anticipated that any cost will be incurred under this scheme for 2004–05 to 2007–08.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211682]

Mr. Touhig: My Department has run no television, newspaper, radio advertising or any other kind of promotional campaign since its creation in July 1999. It has no agencies or departmental public bodies within its responsibilities. We are not responsible for campaigns that may be run by the National Assembly or other Government Departments in Wales. It is not estimated that this will change in the years referred to.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213448]

Mr. Hain: None.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces Strength

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* established strength and *(b)* current trained strength is of officers in (i) the Royal Air Force, (ii) the Royal Navy and (iii) the Army. [213531]

Mr. Caplin: The Trained Officer Strengths and Requirements[1] as at 1 December 2004 were as follows:

[1] The full-time trained strength and the trained requirement both include trained UK regular forces, trained Gurkhas and full-time reserve service (FTRS) personnel. They do not include the Home.

	Trained requirement	*Full-time trained strength*
All Services	30,900	30,700
Naval Service[1]	7,000	6,860
UK Regular Forces	7,000	6,670
FTRS[2]	0	190
Army	13830	14,030
UK Regular Forces	13,720	13,610
FTRS[2]	0	280
Gurkhas	110	140
Royal Air Force	10,080	9,810
UK Regular Forces	9,940	9,620
FTRS[2]	140	190

[1] Service battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment, mobilised reservists or Naval Activated Reservists. They also exclude 180 locally employed personnel, the Gibraltar Permanent Cadre (GPC) who are all male and all trained.

[2] Naval Service comprises the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Notes:

1. FTRS strength figures include full commitment (FC), home commitment (HC) and limited commitment (LC) individuals. For the Army, FC and LC individuals serve against the requirement while HC individuals fill posts specifically for FTRS personnel. For the RAF, FC individuals serve against the requirement while HC and LC individuals fill posts specifically for FTRS personnel.
2. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10, due to the methods used totals may not equal the sum of the parts. Figures ending in five have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.

Defence Transport and Movements Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people currently work for the Defence Transport and Movements Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the personnel costs of the agency are; and what the figures were in 2003–04. [214749]

Mr. Ingram: Staff figures for the Defence Transport and Movements Agency are displayed in the following table:

Defence Transport and Movements Agency

As at 1 April:	*Civilian personnel*	*Service personnel*	*Total*
2003			
Total	290	100	390
Scotland	—	—	—
2004			
Total	320	90	410
Scotland	[1]20	—	[1]20

[1] Personnel numbers for Scotland were supplied from locally held records by the DTMA.

Notes:

1. Personnel numbers other than those sourced from DTMA are published in UK Defence Statistics 2003 and 2004 at Table 2.6.
2. Personnel figures are based on full-time equivalent numbers
3. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10

DTMA's personnel costs for the last two financial years can be found in the agency's latest Annual Reports and Accounts, which are laid in the Library of the House and can be found in the publications section of the Ministry of Defence's website at www.mod.uk.

Defence Vetting Agency

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people work for the Defence Vetting Agency; how many are employed in Scotland; what the equivalent figures were in 2004; what the personnel costs of the agency are; and what they were in 2004. [214251]

Mr. Ingram: In January 2005 the number of people working for the Defence Vetting Agency was 320. Of these six were based in Scotland. The equivalent figures for January 2004 were 320 and six. The personnel costs of the agency for financial year 2004–05 are not yet finalised but are projected to be £8.4 million. In financial year 2003–04 they were £8.1 million.

Falklands War

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) who the *(a)* members and *(b)* stenographer of the board of inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield were; [213603]

(2) which individuals were called to give evidence to the board of inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield; [213602]

(3) if he will publish the contents of the typed manuscripts of evidence produced by the board of inquiry into the sinking of HMS Sheffield; [213601]

(4) what instructions were given to the former Commander-in-Chief, Lord Fieldhouse of Gosport by *(a)* the First Sea Lord, *(b)* the Admiralty Board and *(c)* the Cabinet Office, with regard to convening courts martial proceedings relating to the loss of HMS Sheffield; [213599]

(5) what instructions were issued to the board of inquiry that was convened to investigate the loss of HMS Sheffield, by the commander-in-chief; and what findings were reported to the commander-in-chief on completion of the inquiry; [213600]

(6) what instructions were given to the former First Sea Lord, Sir Henry Leach, by the Cabinet Office, in regard to convening of courts martial proceedings relating to the loss of warships during the Falklands war, with particular reference to the loss of HMS Sheffield. [213598]

Mr. Ingram: The records pertaining to the loss of HMS Sheffield are currently being retrieved from archives. I will write to the hon. Member once they have been received and re-examined, and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

HMCS Chicoutimi

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Royal Navy, *(b)* Ministry of Defence and *(c)* other UK Government personnel have given evidence to the Canadian House of Commons inquiry into the fire on board HMCS Chicoutimi; and if he will make a statement. [213944]

Mr. Ingram: Nine members of the Royal Navy and one Ministry of Defence civil servant are known to have given evidence to the Canadian Board of Inquiry into the fire on board HMCS Chicoutimi. Separately, the Canadian Parliament has convened an inquiry into the acquisition of submarines by the Canadian Government. There is no record of UK armed forces personnel, or UK Government civil servants, being called to give evidence to that inquiry.

Mutual Defence Agreement

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the last transfer of nuclear material between the United States and Britain under the Mutual Defence Agreement took place; and if he will make a statement. [214246]

Mr. Hoon: The 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement makes provision for the transfer of special nuclear materials. Such transfers are in connection with nuclear warhead assurance and stockpile stewardship matters. Precise details of such transfers are being withheld in order to safeguard national security.

RAF Machrihanish

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what infrastructural improvements have been undertaken at RAF Machrihanish in each of the last five years; whether there is work under way; and if he will make a statement. [213918]

Mr. Caplin: No improvements have been made to the infrastructure of the former RAF Station at Machrihanish within the last five years. Care and Maintenance work, however, is regularly undertaken to meet MOD's own requirements and to conform to Health and Safety regulations.

Trident

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the use of satellites for extremely high frequency communications with Trident nuclear submarines; which satellites his Department plans to use for extremely high frequency communications with Trident nuclear submarines; and if he will make a statement on his Department's assessment of the importance of extremely high frequency communications with Trident nuclear submarines. [214373]

Mr. Hoon: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 28 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 150W, by my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Armed Forces.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Trident submarines are on active service; how many are being repaired; and if he will make a statement. [214375]

Mr. Hoon: Of the four Vanguard Class submarines in service, two are rotating through the operational cycle, one is undergoing a period of pre-planned long maintenance, and one is regenerating after completing a pre-planned long maintenance period and refuelling.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Apprenticeships

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much money has been spent by her Department on funding apprenticeships in Lancashire since 1997; [214800]

(2) how many apprenticeships have been made available in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* the North West since 1997. [214799]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom the council's chief executive will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on apprenticeships in Lancashire. [214801]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I warmly endorse the apprenticeship provision in Lancashire, where there are currently 6,814 apprentices in a diverse set of sectors. The LSC offers employers a single point of contact for their apprenticeship provision via an independent broker. The LSC also part fund school liaison officers to promote apprenticeships to year 10 and 11 pupils in schools. The LSC works with Connexions and Jobcentre Plus to maximise take up of apprenticeships and convert jobs without training into apprenticeships.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list, by Learning and Skills Council area, the number of apprenticeships that have been granted in each of the past three years. [215109]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Library.

Building Schools for the Future

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on Building Schools for the Future in Lancashire; and if she will list the new projects *(a)* planned, *(b)* under way and *(c)* completed in Lancashire under the programme. [214802]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Lancashire is in Wave 1 of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme and its business case for 11 schools in Burnley is presently being considered for approval, with construction likely to begin in 2006. BSF will impact on all pupils over the next 15 years and the remaining 108 schools in Lancashire will be split into area groups of investment. One group of investment consisting of 21 schools is projected to fall in Waves 7–9, two groups consisting of 53 schools are projected to fall within Waves 10–12 and two further groups of 34 schools are projected to fall within Waves 13–15.

Since Building Schools for the Future is a relatively young programme, there are as yet no completed projects.

Class Sizes

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children aged *(a)* five, *(b)* six and *(c)* seven years were taught in class sizes of over 30 in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley in each of the last seven years. [214803]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The age of individual pupils in classes is not collected centrally. The available information is shown in the table.

Maintained primary schools[1]: Number of pupils in Key Stage 1 classes of 31 or more pupils taught by one teacher—1998 to 2004—position in January each year

	Lancashire local education authority			*Chorley parliamentary constituency*		
		Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more			*Number of pupils in classes of 31 or more*	
	Total pupils in all classes	*Number of pupils*	*Percentage of pupils[2]*	*Total pupils in all classes*	*Number of pupils*	*Percentage of pupils[2]*
1998[3]	51,036	21,844	42.8	3,453	1,430	41.4
1999	38,094	10,631	27.9	3,341	854	25.6
2000	37,842	4,314	11.4	3,331	479	14.4
2001	36,202	127	0.4	3,273	31	0.9
2002	35,856	133	0.4	3,452	32	0.9
2003	33,407	130	0.4	2,977	0	0.0
2004	33,129	196	0.6	2,881	0	0.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Percentage of pupils in those classes expressed as a percentage of pupils in all classes taught by one teacher.
[3] Before local government reorganisation.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Education (16-to-19 year olds)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the components are of the unit cost funding gap between the cost of educating *(a)* a school sixth-former and *(b)* a further education college student in the 16 to 19 age range. [214185]

Dr. Howells: The Department is unable to provide full details on unit cost for both school sixth forms and further education colleges. We are however able to provide details of funding rates for the two types of institution. It is worth noting however that these figures do not represent all funding that school sixth forms and colleges receive and are thus not directly comparable.

Under the LSC's funding formula the basic cost to the public purse of delivering three A-levels to a student at an English maintained secondary school will be £3,212 in the academic year 2004/05. This figure comprises £785 for the delivery of each A-level learning aim, £750 for each student for the entitlement element of their learning programme, and £107 for each student to meet additional employers' contributions to teachers' pensions.

The LSC funding rates show that the basic cost to the public purse of delivering three A-levels in a sixth form college and a further education college to a student in the 2004/05 academic year will be £3,045. This figure comprises £766 for the delivery of each A-level learning aim, and £747 for each student for the entitlement element of their learning programme.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people are in receipt of education maintenance allowance (EMA) in Birmingham, broken down by constituency; and what the total value of EMA paid to them is. [214034]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Information on the number of young people who have applied, enrolled and been paid an education maintenance allowance is available at local education authority level, but not at constituency level. By the end of December 2004 10,622 young people in the Birmingham local education authority area had received one or more EMA payments. In addition 613 young people in the Solihull local education authority area had received one or more EMA payments.

We do not break down the figures to show specifically how much is spent in each LEA area. The total cost of EMA payments in England, including some January bonuses, at 31 January was £112.3 million.

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students received the £100 education maintenance allowance cash bonus in January; how many payments are outstanding; what the total cost of the payments to date; and what estimate has been made of the expected total annual cost of the cash bonus payments. [214263]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Based on data available at 1 February, 135,000 young people so far have met all the criteria enabling them to receive the January Bonus. The total cost so far of this element of the EMA scheme is £13.5 million.

It is not possible to say how many payments are still outstanding. Decisions from colleges and schools will continue to come through. Data shows that of the 274,000 young people enrolled on the EMA system there have been 21,000 decisions not to pay the bonus so far.

In the first academic year of their post-16 studies, students may be eligible to receive two bonus payments—in January and July. In subsequent years they may be eligible to receive a third bonus in September if they return to study after the summer holiday. For the 2004/05 academic year the estimated cost of the bonuses is around £43 million. For the 2005/06 academic year the estimated cost of the bonuses is around £78 million rising to around £86 million in the 2006/07 academic year when the scheme is fully implemented. These estimates are based on 75 per cent. of EMA students actually meeting all the criteria.

Extended Schools Services

Ms Buck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what support her Department plans to offer schools serving disadvantaged communities to develop extended schools; [209773]

(2) what will constitute the core service offer of an extended *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school; [209776]

(3) what *(a)* financial and *(b)* logistical support her Department plans to give to local authorities to work with (i) schools, (ii) local child care providers and (iii) other local partners in delivering the extended schools programme; [209777]

(4) what measures her Department is taking to ensure that extended schools services are staffed by well-qualified, well-remunerated and well-motivated professionals; [209780]

(5) if she will commission research into interventions offered for children through school-age child care and extended schools services, including their impact on *(a)* educational attainment, *(b)* cognitive, *(c)* social, emotional and behavioural development and *(d)* family and community well-being; [209782]

(6) what funding for *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue has been allocated as part of the Government's 10-Year Strategy for Childcare for delivering the extended schools programme in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools; [209783]

(7) what funding has been allocated as part of the Government's 10-Year Childcare Strategy for ensuring the sustainability of extended schools services in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools. [209784]

Margaret Hodge: Government are committed to the development of extended schools to provide a range of enrichment activities and to support the Childcare Strategy. The Department for Education and Skills' "Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners" sets out the Government's expectation for all primary and secondary schools to offer a core set of extended services over time. The core offer for primary schools encompasses a wide range of study support and enrichment activities, parenting support, including family learning and swift referral to a wider range of specialised support services for pupils. Some schools will work with children's centres and other providers to make provision available for younger children. The Government's 10-Year Childcare Strategy sets out the expectation that by 2010 all parents with children aged 5–11 will be offered the guarantee of affordable school based child care between the hours of 8 am to 6 pm, all year round. By 2008, half of all parents of primary aged children will be able to access the child care offer. Provision could be available in a local school, in a neighbouring school or on a different site, provided by the school or in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers, including local child minders.

The core offer for secondary schools includes study support and enrichment activities, widespread community use of school's facilities, family learning activities, swift and easy referral from every school to a wider range of specialised support services for pupils and a child care guarantee, or "youth offer" available between 8 am and 6 pm on weekdays. By 2008, at least a third of all secondary schools sites will be open year round and beyond the school day offering a range of interesting activities for young people. All schools will be doing so by 2010. Provision could be available in a local school, in a neighbouring school or on a different site, provided by the school or in partnership with voluntary and private sector providers, including local child minders. We will also be testing out demand for a formal child care guarantee that is 8 am to 6 pm particularly for children aged 11–12.

Schools will need to adopt new and innovative approaches to recruiting and deploying staff to ensure there is a staffing structure appropriate to the extended services they wish to deliver. Schools should look at the expertise both within the school and locally to determine who can best deliver each aspect of extended services. This will include working effectively with other services and with the voluntary, private and community sectors. In some cases school staff, such as support staff and teaching assistants, will already have the relevant skills and experience and may want to help deliver some of the services such as child care.

The Government will be producing a strategy for the children's workforce shortly, following up the vision in "Every Child Matters: Change for Children". This will include national and local action to ensure we can attract and retain the right people at all levels in this workforce, including those in extended schools. It will include simpler and more rewarding career pathways, alongside better workforce planning locally and more focused use of investment that is already being made to improve the knowledge and qualifications of people in different roles. We will also promote greater focus on good leadership, management and supervision. Remuneration levels will remain, for most of these workers, a matter between them and their employer.

The Department have already committed around £50 million over the period 2003–04 to 2004–05 for the development of extended schools, with the money targeting areas serving disadvantaged communities. Just under £44 million of that £50 million was paid via the Standards Fund (including £2.8 million made available by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and £1.8 million from the Home Office) and £6.8 million was paid through the Sure Start General Grant. In addition to this £14 million from the Young People's Fund element of the Big Lottery Fund has been made available to 78 local authorities over three years from 2004–05 to support the development of extended schools across their areas. In the financial year 2005–06 my Department will make available just over £107 million to support the development of extended services in both primary and secondary schools in all local authorities. In later years we will provide further sums including funding to support the development of school based child care. An announcement will be made in due course.

Funding to support the delivery of extended services, including the school age child care offer can be used flexibly by local authorities for both capital and revenue purposes to help overcome barriers that they may face in developing extended services. This can include minor capital works such as refurbishment of reception or play areas, and revenue funding, for example, to support a senior management post that might work across a cluster of schools to develop extended services. The funding is aimed at kick- starting the delivery of extended services but over time, these services should become self—sustaining within existing funding strands or through charging. Schools can charge for some services such as community use of the schools premises and child care. In the case of school based child care, parents, who are eligible, can claim part of the cost through the child care element of the working tax credit. Some services such as study support and other curriculum-related enrichment services will be developed by schools making best use of their existing baselines. Other services such as health and social care should be supported by budgets that support those services.

My Department is supporting local authorities to work with schools, local child care providers and local partners in delivering the extended schools programme in logistical ways too. In 2002, the DfES published extended schools guidance that provides information and advice on a range of legal, financial and practical issues. The Extended Schools Prospectus, trailed in the Prime Minister's speech to the Daycare Trust on 11 November, will set out the vision for extended schools to schools, local authorities and stakeholders in health, social care and the private and voluntary sectors. It will include a core document that will be supported by a number of on-line know how leaflets that draw on the practical experience of schools already delivering services. These will include case studies, 'how to' advice, 'hints and tips' as well as emerging evidence of the impact on child outcomes. The prospectus and know how pack will be made available on the web, so that new issues can be addressed as they emerge. The prospectus will be launched shortly. The website www.teachernet.gov.uk/extendedschools also features a number of case study examples of schools delivering extended services that schools and other interested parties might use to draw upon key lessons. The DfES has also appointed ContinYou to run The Extended Schools Support Service (TESSS) to support and advise schools and LEAs developing an extended schools approach, and which includes advice on developing links with the community.

My Department is very committed to research on extended services and child care in schools. We have in progress an evaluation looking at the impacts of full service extended schools on children, their families and communities; a nationally representative survey of schools to measure the prevalence and characteristics of extended services and child care; and an evaluation of an Extended Schools Childcare pilot. Initial findings from these projects will be published by the Department in summer 2005, autumn 2005 and spring 2006 respectively.

Further Education

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the staying-on rate at 16 years was for Greater London, broken down by local education authority, in each year since 1997. [214641]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The latest published local participation estimates for 16-year-olds in education and training in England are for end 2001 (2001/02 academic year). A consistent historical time series is currently unavailable due to issues with post-Census local population estimates for individual ages for earlier years. Local participation estimates for end 2002 and end 2003 (provisional) are due to be published in March 2005 together with a consistent historic participation time series.

Participation estimates of education and LSC funded work based learning (WBL) by 16-year-olds in Greater London, broken down by local education authority (LEA), for end 2001 are given in Table 1.

For Inner London, participation in education and training is only shown as a total because participation estimates for individual Inner London LEAs cannot be estimated reliably. This is due to the considerable numbers of pupils who attend independent schools in an LEA other than the one in which they reside (residence information for independent school pupils is not collated centrally).

Table 1: Participation in education and training of 16-year-olds for Greater London, broken down by LEA, for end 2001

Percentage of age group

	Full-time education	*Education and LSC funded work based learning (WBL)*
Greater London	74	82
Inner London	73	81
Outer London	75	82
Barking and Dagenham	56	63
Barnet	76	82
Bexley	68	78
Brent	77	82
Bromley	77	82
Croydon	77	83
Baling	76	81
Enfield	75	83
Greenwich	68	79
Harrow	85	90
Havering	71	80
Hillingdon	75	84
Hounslow	70	78
Kingston-upon-Thames	80	85
Merton	70	77
Redbridge	81	86
Richmond-upon-Thames	92	97
Button	76	84
Waltham Forest	78	87
England	71	82

Source:

Statistical Bulletin, "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17 year-olds in each local area in England, end 2001". http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SBU/b000450/index.shtml

Local Learning and Skills Councils (Expenditure)

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much *(a)* the national, *(b)* each regional and *(c)* each local learning and skills council spent on (i) marketing and (ii) audit in 2003–04. [214214]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to the hon. Member with this information and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

National Europass Centre

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the *(a)* role, *(b)* budget and *(c)* staffing level of the National Europass Centre. [215209]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In co-ordinating activities at national level the role of the National Europass Centre (NEC) will be to provide information on the various instruments in the Europass Framework, provide a link to the EU Commission's Europass portal and undertake promotion of Europass. Budgets have not yet been allocated but the EU Commission has indicated that the UK might expect up to a maximum of €110,000 (£77,000) in each of 2005 and 2006, on a matched funding basis. An appropriate level of staffing has yet to be identified but will be commensurate with the tasks and functions of the NEC.

Nuclear Energy Degrees

Mr. Tynan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate degree courses involving training in atomic energy related skills are available in England. [213526]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* The latest course listing on the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) website, which covers undergraduate courses only, shows that no universities currently offer undergraduate courses specifically in atomic energy. However, the report commissioned by the Nuclear Safety Directorate in autumn 2001 and the Update On Nuclear Education in British Universities December 2003, identified the following universities which ran postgraduate or undergraduate courses which contained some nuclear content:

Postgraduate Courses

University of Bath
University of Birmingham
City University [1]
University of Cambridge [1]
UHI Millennium Institute [1]
University of Hull
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine [1]
Lancaster University
University of Liverpool [1]
Loughborough University
University of Manchester Victoria [1]
Middlesex University [1]
University of Plymouth
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
University of Southampton
Strathclyde University
University of Surrey [1]
University of Wales, Swansea
University College London
Royal Navy School of Marine and Air Engineering, HMS Sultan (Department of Nuclear Science and Technology) [1,2]

Undergraduate Courses

University of Bath
University of Birmingham
University of Cambridge
City University
De Montfort University
The University of Hull
Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
Lancaster University
University of Leeds
University of Liverpool
Loughborough University
University of Manchester Victoria
Middlesex University
University of Plymouth
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
Sheffield Hallam University
University of Southampton
University of Strathclyde
University of Surrey
University College London
Royal Navy School of Marine and Air Engineering, HMS Sultan (Department of Nuclear Science and Technology) [1]

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[1] Identifies Institutions from 2003 update where initiatives have been set up.

[2] The report also included HMS Sultan, which is a Ministry of Defence establishment.

According to the 2001 report, the number of students on courses containing any nuclear content is around 320 students per year on postgraduate courses and around 1,460 per year on undergraduate courses.

The 2003 update suggests there has been encouraging signs of expansion in this field.

Nursing Courses

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the drop-out rate for nursing courses has been in each year since 1997, broken down by teaching institution. [214411]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Figures are not held centrally. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) publish non-completion rates of students on full-time undergraduate courses in 'Performance Indicators in Higher Education', but these are not calculated for individual subjects, or courses.

Stockton, South

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the amount of funding per pupil in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary education has changed in the constituency of Stockton South since 1997. [215309]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is produced according to local education authority areas rather than districts within an area. Stockton South is a constituency in Stockton-on-Tees. The following table therefore shows the per pupil figures in real terms for Stockton-on-Tees.

Average funding per pupil, Stockton-on-Tees

Figures in real terms-1997–98 to 2004–05

	Primary (3–10 year-olds) (£)	*Year-on-year percentage change*	*Secondary (11–15 year-olds) (£)*	*Year-on-year percentage change*
1997–98	2,200		3,170	
1998–99	2,290	4	3,220	2
1999–2000	2,450	7	3,390	5
2000–01	2,720	11	3,740	10
2001–02	2,930	8	4,000	7
2002–03	3,060	4	4,030	1
2003–04	3,290	8	4,210	4
2004–05	3,380	3	4,320	3

Notes:

1. Price Base: Real terms at 2003–04 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 30 September 2004.
2. Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education SSA/EFS settlements and exclude the pensions transfer to EPS and LSC.
3. Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES Departmental Expenditure Limits relevant to pupils aged 3–10 and 11–15 and exclude EM As and grants not allocated at LEA level.
4. The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC 3-year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3–4 year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.
5. Rounding: Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
6. Status: 2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Teachers

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures her Department has introduced to increase the efficiency of the system for dealing with allegations of abuse against teachers. [213553]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: In 2001, following concerns about the length of time taken to deal with allegations, my Department established a network of 25 co-ordinators, each responsible for a cluster of LEAs, located within existing police force boundaries. The co-ordinators' priority is to negotiate and agree arrangements to speed up the handling of allegations of abuse against teachers and other school-based staff, but they also have a strategic role in this area and in relation to child protection procedures generally.

In addition my officials have worked closely with the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) and the teacher unions to revise and update the "Joint NEOST/Teacher Union Guidance on Education Staff and Child Protection: Staff Facing an Allegation of Abuse" and that updated guidance was published and distributed by NEOST and the teacher organisations in September 2002.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to ensure that teachers are protected from false allegations of abuse by pupils. [213554]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My Department is currently consulting on an improved process for handling allegations against teachers and other school-based staff. The proposals include target timescales; local panels for schools to use to carry out independent disciplinary investigations; new procedures to improve the management of cases and liaison between schools, local authorities, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and other agencies to ensure that cases are dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently. It also takes account of advice by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that anyone under investigation should not be named until they are charged with an offence.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the guidelines for protecting teachers accused of abuse by pupils. [213555]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: My officials are closely involved in monitoring the effectiveness of the current arrangements for handling allegations of abuse against teachers. The current guidelines for staff facing allegations of abuse were produced by the National Employers Organisation for School Teachers (NEOST) and the teacher unions, with the involvement of my officials. The national network of Investigation Referral Support Co-ordinators, which is funded by my Department, is responsible for improving practice and procedure in dealing with allegations and has also produced guidance on this issue.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* teaching assistants there were in each local education authority in Greater London in each of the last seven years. [214556]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been published in the Statistics of Education School Workforce in England Volume, 2004 edition published on 27 January 2005, a copy of which will be placed in the House of Commons Library. Annex table A2 gives the number of teachers in service in each local education authority and table A9 the number of teaching assistants. The publication is also available at the following URL: www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgatewav/DB/VOL/v000554/index.shtml

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers there were in North Durham in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214193]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows the full time equivalent number of regular teachers employed in maintained nursery, primary, secondary and maintained and non-maintained special schools in North Durham constituency in January 1997, 2001 and 2004, the latest information available.

Full-time equivalent number of regular teachers in North Durham constituency

	Number
1997	660
2001	690
2004	700

Source:

Annual School Census

Top-up Fees

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on the charging of top-up fees to students who leave school in 2005 and take a gap year, but change the course that they will be taking during that gap year. [214551]

Dr. Howells: In order to qualify for the statutory exemption from higher variable fees from 2006/07, a student taking a gap year in 2005/06 must have received an offer of a place on a university course by 1 August 2005. If they change their mind about the course they want to do, whether they will be charged higher variable fees will depend on whether the subject matter of the course to which they wish to change is largely the same as the course for which they originally applied. If the university considers that the subject matter of the new course is essentially the same as the one for which the student originally applied they will continue to qualify for the statutory exemption. If they do not consider this to be so, the student will no longer qualify.

University Funding

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding her Department has provided for *(a)* teaching, *(b)* research and *(c)* staff development since 1996–97 for (i) Newcastle and (ii) Northumbria universities. [215063]

Dr. Howells: The latest information is given in the tables.

Recurrent funding for university of Newcastle-upon-Tyne[1]

£000

	Recurrent funds for teaching and research	*Of which:*		*Funds for rewarding and developing staff*[2]
		Teaching	*Research*	
1997–98	52,331	34,009	18,322	—
1998–99	57,641	36,710	20,930	—
1999–2000	59,033	38,226	20,807	—
2000–01	61,205	40,334	20,871	—
2001–02	65,404	42,672	21,503	1,229
2002–03	69,945	45,177	22,885	1,884
2003–04	75,475	46,718	25,948	2,809
2004–05	81,276	53,752	27,524	—

Recurrent funding for university of Northumbria[1]

£000

	Recurrent funds for teaching and research	*Of which:*		*Funds for rewarding and developing staff*[2]
		Teaching	*Research*	
1997–98	33,517	32,380	1,137	—
1998–99	37,942	36,577	1,365	—
1999–2000	38,995	37,510	1,485	—
2000–01	39,498	37,982	1,515	—
2001–02	41,756	39,294	1,553	909
2002–03	43,689	41,083	1,266	1,339
2003–04	46,839	43,930	895	2,015
2004–05	51,206	50,257	949	—

[1] Funding figures show HEFCE recurrent grant for teaching and research only. They exclude other HEFCE grants such as for capital and other special initiatives. They also exclude funding from other public sources, such as the SLC, NHS, TTA, LSC, research councils etc.

[2] Funding for rewarding and developing staff was first allocated for 2001–02 and transferred into teaching grant in 2004–05.

Source:
HEFCE

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the UK will provide to the South East Asia region in establishing a tsunami early warning system. [213280]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: There is strong political will, both within the Indian Ocean region and internationally, to establish a tsunami Early Warning System in the Indian Ocean. This will involve countries in South East Asia and around the Indian Ocean working together to produce a workable and well co-ordinated system, building on those components already in place. The immediate need is for the countries in the region to determine the nature and organisation of the system they want.

A recent meeting organised by the Thai Government in Phuket reached a strong consensus on some important features of an early warning system for the region. It should: be designed and owned by countries in the region; build on mechanisms that already exist; and warn against multiple hazards, such as tropical storms and storm surges as well as tsunamis. It was also agreed that the UN should co-ordinate the development of the system and that investment should focus, not just on highly technical solutions, but on educating, and communicating any warning to, coastal communities.

The UK stands ready, if needed, to provide support to an early warning system once countries of the region have made progress on the design of a system. However, if there are other donors willing to provide all the finance needed—as looks likely—the UK is also willing to step aside and focus its resources on other equally important but less well funded measures to reduce the impact of disasters. Chief among these is the need to help developing countries of the region build on and enhance their own capacity to manage and reduce their risk to disasters.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support he plans to give to allow farmers in places affected by the tsunami to start farming again, and in particular to begin re-stocking. [214008]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Farmers have been badly affected by the tsunami and DFID is committed to rebuilding their livelihoods. Of the £75 million allocation for emergency relief and first stage recovery, about 20 per cent. has been earmarked for immediate support to rebuilding farming and fishing communities' livelihoods through relevant UN agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGO's). I am conscious of the need to build on local capacity through encouraging targeted regeneration of local agricultural systems. I recognise the need to reach as many affected people from the region as possible and to enable them to return to productive work.

In Indonesia, we shall provide funds through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to co-ordinate a broad-based livelihood recovery programme in rural areas of Aceh. This will include, among other initiatives, small grants to farmers, which will be disbursed by local organisations working with them. The grants are designed to be flexible and respond to needs, which for many, will involve restocking. We support a similar strategy for Sri Lanka and the Maldives through a regional programme led by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

International NGO's are, on the whole, well funded, but we add support where there are clear needs. In southern India and Sri Lanka, for instance, we have recently approved five projects that will provide immediate support to affected communities totalling approximately £1.8 million. These projects include livelihood recovery activities and focus on the needs of fishing communities, farmers, agricultural workers and other livelihood groups. One of these projects includes land reclamation and desalination activities.

As for our contribution to long-term recovery, we intend to respond to needs assessed by competent agencies and to fund requests by affected countries, in partnership with other donors, the UN and the International banks, namely the World Bank and Asian Development bank.

Brazil

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind has been provided to Engineers Without Borders UK by his Department for the programme in the state of Minas Gerais, Brazil with the Iracambi Atlantic Rainforest Research Center since its inception; and if he will make a statement. [214254]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID has not provided direct funding for the work of Engineers Without Borders with the Iracambi Atlantic Rainforest Research Center (ARRC) in Brazil Minas Gerais. However, DFID has co-financed the Rain Forest Trust Fund (RFT Fund) which has supported civil society organisations in the Atlantic Rain Forest. DFID provided £1.5 million to the RFT in the early 1990s as part of the $58 million support by G7 donors. The RFTs support for civil society networks included $800,000 to Rede Mata Atlântica (RMA), a non-governmental network seeking to conserve the Atlantic Rain Forest. The Society of Friends of Iracambi, who are responsible for maintaining the Iracambi ARRC, are a member of the RMA.

Guyana

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* injuries there have been as a result of the recent flooding in Guyana. [213901]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: As at 2 February 2005 there had been 6 reported deaths associated with the floods. It is, however, expected that deaths will increase as a result of poor sanitation and water-borne or water related illnesses. Education advisories (information notices put out by a Guyana government information service) are informing communities on how to reduce health risks.

The Government of Guyana's Ministry of Health and the Pan-American Health Organisation's (PAHO) country team are currently developing a database to monitor and track outbreaks of disease. This will allow appropriate health safeguard measures to be put in place, and rapid health responses to be mobilised and should help avoid epidemics. The main concern at the moment is over an increased incidence of leptospirosis, which is a bacterial disease caused by exposure to water contaminated by infected animals.

DFID's relief interventions will be focused on the water and sanitation and public health aspects. Through our support to both PAHO (£57,000) and the United Nations Children's Fund (£80,000), we will be directly contributing to ensuring safe and clean drinking water is available to approximately 40,000 children and appropriate sanitation and environmental health initiatives are in place for some 195,000 people/35,000 households.

The UK makes a further contribution to the water and sanitation aspects of the relief programme through the European Community Humanitarian Assistance (ECHO). ECHO is providing €100,000 or approximately £69,000[1] of which UK share at 18 per cent. is £12,420, to PAHO for medical supplies. ECHO is also providing €200,000, approximately £138,000[2] of which UK share at 18 per cent. is £24,840, to Oxfam for water and sanitation work.

[1] Using prevailing exchange rate of €1: £0.69 on February 2005

[2] As above

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether his Department's field offices covering countries with large numbers of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS will be producing *(a)* detailed action plans and *(b)* revised country assistance plans setting out how they will be spending the £123 million committed for services to this group; [215343]

(2) how the £123 million committed by the UK Government for responding to the needs of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS in Africa will be allocated between his Department's field offices in different countries. [215344]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: It is important that countries have detailed action plans to address AIDS. DFID country offices make bilateral spending decisions based on countries' articulated priorities as identified through national strategies and detailed action plans which include support to orphans and vulnerable children. These plans are being developed at national level (often with UNICEF support), to create a supportive environment for children's access to health and education, community services and basic needs.

In responding to these action plans, DFID strongly supports the "Three Ones" approach: one strategic framework, one AIDS authority and one monitoring system. Thus DFID's own country assistance plans (CAPS) are designed to support the implementation of the "Three Ones". All CAPS will reflect and report AIDS initiatives, indicating where more needs to be done. DFID will monitor all CAPS with reports going to the Management Board.

Leasing

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the equipment leasing arrangements entered into by his Department in each of the last two years; and what the cost is to public funds in each case. [200870]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: No new equipment leasing arrangements were entered into in the UK, in the last two years. Existing arrangements that were already in place, for photocopying equipment, cost £54,737 in 2002–03 and £41,798 in 2003–04.

Information on leasing arrangements in our overseas offices is not centrally available and could not be produced without incurring disproportionate cost.

Middle East

Dr. Tonge: [illegible] ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the humanitarian consequences of the confiscation of land in the West Bank from Palestinians following the application of the Absentee Property Law in East Jerusalem. [214281]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Government expressed their concern over Israel's application of the Absentee Property Law in East Jerusalem with the Government of Israel. We now welcome the Israeli Attorney General's announcement on 1 February that the application of this law in East Jerusalem is unlawful. We have not made a specific assessment of the humanitarian consequences of the law's application to date, but are investigating whether or not it has deprived any Palestinians of their land in East Jerusalem.

Namibia

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid has been given by the United Kingdom to Namibia in each of the last three years. [214385]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: UK bilateral assistance to Namibia was worth £2.0 million in 2001–02; £2.2 million in 2002–03; and £1.4 million in 2003–04, the last year for which figures are available. The focus of DFID's bilateral programme in Namibia is on developing livelihoods for the poor in the centre and north of the country.

Nigeria

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind has been provided to Engineers Without Borders UK by his Department for the programme in the Dadiya region of Nigeria with Savanna Conservation Nigeria and Nakruda since its inception; what assessment his Department has undertaken of the (i) economic, (ii) social and (iii) humanitarian impact of the programme; what assessment his Department has made of the long-term viability of the programme; and if he will make a statement. [214253]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is aware of the good work undertaken by Engineers without Borders (EWB) UK. Initiatives such as placements to expose engineering students to work in developing countries while making a positive impact on peoples' lives, and the undertaking of small-scale research projects are welcomed. However, DFID has not provided funding for EWB centrally or for its work with the Savanna Conservation Nigeria and Nakruda programme in Nigeria and so has not undertaken any assessments of its activities or long term viability.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years; [213442]

(2) how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213718]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government has also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers".

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213799]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) does not hold details of all of these costs centrally. The format the costs are held in means we are unable to differentiate between training days and those development days held away from the Department. As far as we can tell from our records, in the last seven years the centrally reported spending on training and conferences, including retreats and away-days and related costs was as follows:

Financial year	*Training and conferences (£ million)*
2003–04	5.22
2002–03	2.28
2001–02	1.72
2000–01	1.33
1999–2000	1.10
1998–99	0.68
1997–98	0.97

The way we centrally gathered information on costs changed in 2003 which accounts for a substantial amount of the increase between 2002–03 and 2003–04.

DFID Departments do not necessarily centrally report on all training and development activity so there may be under reporting in the above figures.

DFID is committed to ensuring staff have the right skills and expertise to meet our commitment to the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals.

Water Shortage

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of its progress in combating the world's impending water shortage, with specific regard to the United Nation's 2003 prediction that by 2050, 7 billion people in 60 countries will be without sufficient water; and if he will make a statement. [214382]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The sustainable and integrated management of land and water resources is critical to combating increasing water shortages. The UK agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg the target for all countries to develop Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency plans by 2005, with support to be provided for developing countries. DFID's approach to implementing this target is set out in the Water Action Plan (March 2004), which will be reviewed regularly.

DFID provides significant support to the Global Water Partnership (GWP), which is an umbrella organisation that supports development of national water resource management plans in key partner countries. GWP is also the key organisation coordinating policy and monitoring progress at the international level. A recent survey carried out by GWP has suggested that around 40 per cent. of countries have yet to make progress on developing Integrated Water Resources Management plans and only 20 per cent. of countries are likely to meet the 2005 target.

DFID also support the "Global Water Supply and Sanitation Assessment" reports of the UNICEF/WHO Joint Monitoring Programme which include water availability data, and the EU Water Initiative which includes a water resource management component. DFID has supported the UNESCO led World Water Assessment Programme from its outset in mid-2000. This is an effective long-term programme providing assessment, monitoring and reporting of the status of the world's water. These reviews assist in developing frameworks for better assessment, allocation and monitoring of water use, particularly in the water scarce areas.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths

Simon Hughes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of how many deaths in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* North Southwark and Bermondsey alcohol was the primary cause in each of the last five years. [214332]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Simon Hughes, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking in respect of how many deaths in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* North Southwark and Bermondsey alcohol was the primary cause in each of the last five years. (214332)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2003. The table below shows the numbers of deaths among residents of Greater London and North Southwark and Bermondsey parliamentary constituency where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1999 to 2003.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] for Greater London and North Southwark and Bermondsey parliamentary constituency[2] 1999 to 2003[3]

Number of deaths

	Greater London	*North Southwark and Bermondsey*
1999	844	11
2000	827	18
2001	788	15
2002	817	13
2003	847	16

[1] For the years 1999–2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed as follows:

291—Alcohol psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol

For the years 2001–03 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:

F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
I42.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:

Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Usual residents of these areas.

[3] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

ATM Charges

John Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of ATM charges on basic bank account customers; [213095]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the effects of charging for use of cash machines in public places; [213196]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of ATM charges on *(a)* financial inclusion and *(b)* low income groups. [213208]

Mr. Timms: No such assessment has been made.

Care Homes (VAT)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will conduct an investigation into what medical aids and other essential household items should be available to nursing and residential homes free of VAT. [213995]

Dawn Primarolo: VAT is a broad based tax on consumer expenditure generally. Nursing and residential homes, like any other businesses, incur VAT on many of the purchases that they make.

However, charitable nursing and residential homes for disabled people benefit from a number of specific VAT zero rates on their purchases, including medicinal products, medical equipment and certain equipment for disabled people. Under our long-standing agreements with our European partners, while we are permitted to keep our existing zero rates we may not extend them or introduce new ones.

Child Deaths

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children have died by drowning in each of the past five years. [215278]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Hugh Robertson, dated 8 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many children have died by drowning in each of the past five years. I am replying in his absence. (215278)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2003. Figures for deaths due to drowning among children aged 0 to 15 are shown in the table below for each year from 1999 to 2003.

Number of deaths from drowning[1] *among children aged under 16, England and Wales, 1999 to 2003*[2]

	Number of deaths
1999	49
2000	35
2001	30
2002	31
2003	33

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code 994.1 for the years 1999 and 2000, and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T75.1 from 2001 onwards.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Child Tax Credit

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many child tax credit appeal cases have been received in each month since the inception of tax credits; [214143]

(2) how many people in each region have appealed against a decision on a child tax credit application since introduction of the credit. [214446]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average timescale is for a child tax credit appeal, broken down by region. [214171]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the average time to settle a child tax credit appeal by region is not available. The Inland Revenue aims to acknowledge receipt of an appeal against a tax credits decision within two working days.

Where possible the Department aims to settle an appeal by agreement with the appellant.

Where the Inland Revenue cannot settle the appeal by agreement, it is submitted to The Appeals Service who aim to consider the appeal within 12 weeks of receipt of the submission currently achieving less than eight weeks.

Correspondence

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will reply to the letter of 5 January from the hon. Member for Northavon, regarding the tax credit entitlement of a constituent, Ms. Hewitt. [215395]

Dawn Primarolo: I will write to the hon. Member shortly about his constituent's tax credits entitlement.

Council Tax (Braintree)

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many properties there were in each council tax band in each of the Witham wards of Braintree district council in 2004–05. [215118]

Dawn Primarolo: The Listing Officer, of the Valuation Office Agency, does not hold the banding records for each of the Witham wards individually. The number of dwellings in each council tax band for properties in the Braintree district council area with an address containing a Witham postal district, in 2004–05, is:

Band	Number
A	971
B	5,167
C	3,423
D	1,099
E	734
F	391
G	183
H	8

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214962]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to improve the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented the economic performance of the Pendle constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 47 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by 86 per cent. and 88 per cent. receptivity.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Stockton, South

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in each ward of Stockton, South claim *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* working tax credit. [215307]

Dawn Primarolo: Data from the Department for Work and Pensions shows that the number of households in receipt of pension credit in each ward of Stockton, South at 31 December 2004 were as follows:

Ward (Stockton, South)	*Households in receipt of pension credit*
Bishopsgarth	310
Egglescliffe	220
Elm Tree	250
Fairfield	195
Grangefield	220
Hartburn	165
Ingleby Barwick	145
Mandale	410
Parkfield	420
Preston	110
Stainsby	360
Victoria	440
Village	385
Yarm	285

Notes:

1. Source: IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.
2. All wards based on Census Wards current at April 2003.
3. Benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of five to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Estimates of the number of in-work families in each constituency receiving tax credits are published in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses. December 2004". This can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at: www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Estimates for April 2005 will be published in April or May 2005.

Estimates for smaller areas are not currently available.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Sub-committee—EEC-Albania met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214296]

Dawn Primarolo: The EC/Albania Working Party on Customs and Taxation meets approximately once a year, in either Brussels or Tirana. The last three meetings were in Tirana (October 2002), Brussels (February 2004) and Tirana (January 2005). The next meeting is provisionally scheduled for the beginning of 2006 in Brussels. The Commission act on behalf of the EC. Member states can participate as observers, but none has attended. The Commission debriefs the Council Working Group after each meeting.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee-EEC-Romania met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214743]

Dawn Primarolo: One meeting took place under the Italian Presidency in September 2003 in Brussels and one was held in Bucharest under the Dutch Presidency in September 2004. No UK Government expert attended either meeting.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Customs Cooperation Subcommittee-EEC-Russia met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214744]

Dawn Primarolo: Only one meeting was held under the presidencies in question. This was in Moscow in October 2003. No Government expert was in attendance.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on statistics relating to the trading of goods with non-member countries met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214745]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on statistics relating to the trading of goods between member states met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214746]

Dawn Primarolo: The Committee on Statistics relating to the trading of goods with non-member countries and the Committee on Statistics relating to the trading of goods with member states meet as a single Committee. Meetings were held in Luxembourg on the following dates:

	Date
Italian presidency	10–11 November 2003
Irish presidency	10–11 March 2004 14–15 June 2004
Dutch presidency	24–25 November 2004

The UK was represented by officials from HM Customs and Excise.

Euro

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officials have worked on the changeover plan for British euro membership since 9 June 2003;

how many officials' man-hours were spent on the plan; what cost has been incurred; and if he will make a statement. [215179]

Mr. Timms: As part of the policy of "prepare and decide", the Government are committed to ensuring that the UK retains a genuine option to join the single currency if that is what the Government, Parliament and the people in a referendum decide. The Euro Preparations Unit in the Treasury works with stakeholders from across the economy to ensure that euro preparations are at an appropriate level. Information on the number of officials and working hours spent on the "third Outline National Changeover Plan" published in June 2003 cannot be separately identified. The costs are met from within the Treasury's three-year departmental expenditure limits.

Further Education

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce the level at which further education colleges pay VAT to the level applied to the school sector. [214486]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 762W, to the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington).

Greater London Jobs

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of jobs created in the Greater London area as a result of public investment in each of the last five years. [214372]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about jobs created in the Greater London area resulting from public investment. (214372)

While statistics of jobs created as a result of public investment are not available, ONS's published workforce jobs statistics enable comparisons to be made of net changes, from year to year, in the total number of jobs.

The attached table shows the numbers of jobs and changes in jobs for the Greater London area, from September 1999 to September 2004, the latest period available.

No information is available about the extent to which the changes in jobs in Greater London result from public investment.

Number of civilian work force jobs and change in numbers of jobs in the Greater London area: 1999 to 2004

Thousand

	Civilian work force jobs[1, 2]
Number of jobs	
1999	4,349
2000	4,539
2001	4,555
2002	4,435
2003	4,497
2004	4,485
Change[3] *in number of jobs*	
2000	191
2001	15
2002	-120
2003	62
2004	-12

[1] Estimates are not seasonally adjusted.

[2] Estimates of civilian work force jobs include self-employed jobs and Government supported trainees. Estimates exclude jobs in the armed forces.

[3] The 2000 to 2004 change has been rounded to the nearest thousand separately from rounded levels for 1999 and 2004.

Source:

ONS Work force jobs series

Home Reversions

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to introduce legislation to bring home reversions under the regulation of the Financial Services Authority. [214483]

Mr. Timms: The Government supports my hon. Friend's ten-minute rule Bill entitled 'Regulation of Financial Services (Land Transactions)' which was introduced to the House on 26 January 2005. This will enable activities relating to certain arrangements involving the acquisition or disposal of land to be regulated under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA), which include home reversion schemes.

If the Bill does not achieve Royal Assent this Session, the Treasury intends to bring forward legislation to change FSMA as soon as parliamentary time allows.

Household Incomes

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the percentage change in household net income has been for each decade over each of the past 30 years; and if he will make a statement. [214018]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Chris Ruane, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the percentage change in household net income has been in each decade over each of the past 30 years. (214018)

The information requested is shown in the table below. The household net income series used in the calculations is the national accounts series for real disposable income of the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors, i.e. total income less deductions, e.g. taxes. The data are chained volume measures (i.e. the effect of price changes is excluded) and are referenced on the year 2001.

The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined, as separate estimates are not available.

Real households' disposable income and percentage changes over 10-year periods 1973–83, 1983–93 and 1993–2003

	Real households' disposable income (chained volume measure referenced on year 2001) (£ million)	*Percentage change over period*
1973	337,375	—
1983	385,704	14
1993	549,995	43
2003	728,647	32

Income Tax

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated loss of revenue would be if the 10 per cent. band of income tax were to be increased by *(a)* £1,000, *(b)* £2,000 and *(c)* £3,000. [215396]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to table 1.6 "Direct effects of illustrative tax changes" on the Inland Revenue website www.ir.gov.uk/stats/tax expenditures/table1-6.xls

The figures exclude any estimate of behavioural response to the tax change.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated loss of revenue would be if the lower threshold for income tax were increased by *(a)* £1,000, *(b)* £2,000 and *(c)* £3,000; and how many existing taxpayers would no longer pay income tax in each case. [215397]

Dawn Primarolo: The requested information is contained in the following table:

Numbers: millions; Amounts: billion

2004–05	*Cost*	*Number of taxpayers taken out of income tax*
(a) Increase Personal Allowances by £1,000	6.6	1.8
(b) Increase Personal Allowances by £2,000	12.7	3.4
(c) Increase Personal Allowances by £3,000	18.6	4.9

Notes:
The figures represent increases to the personal allowance and personal allowances for individuals aged 65 to 74 and 75 or over. The estimates are based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI) 2002–03 and December 2004 Pre Budget assumptions.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated yield arising from levying income tax at a rate of 50 per cent. on all taxable incomes in excess of £50,000 per annum would be. [215398]

Dawn Primarolo: Comprehensive information on income tax has been placed in the Library of the House.

The income tax information is based upon the 2002–03 Survey of Personal Incomes and December 2004 pre-Budget assumptions and excludes any estimate of behavioural response to the tax change.

Inland Revenue

Mr. Gray: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 987W, on Inland Revenue informers, when the Inland Revenue first categorised members of the public assisting them as informers or covert human intelligence sources; and what criteria the Inland Revenue uses to determine whether a member of the public assisting it is a covert human intelligence source rather than an informer. [214724]

Dawn Primarolo: Members of the public who voluntarily supply information to the Inland Revenue, concerning the tax affairs of others are by definition informers. Section 26 of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2002 sets out the legal definition of a Covert Human Intelligence Source. The Inland Revenue complies with this legislation, and the supporting Codes of Practice, in dealing with Covert Sources.

Life Expectancy

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the life expectancy of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley was in (A) 1980–89, (B) 1990–99 and (C) 2004. [214004]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Lindsay Hoyle, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the life expectancy of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley was in (A) 1980–1989, (B) 1990–99 and (C) 2004. (214004)

Figures for life expectancy at birth for English regions and local authorities are published annually by ONS based on three-year rolling averages. These were first calculated for the period 1991–1993 and the most recent available data are for 2001–2003. Figures for these two periods, and for 1994–1996 and 1997–1999, are provided in the table below for the North West and Chorley. Figures are not readily available for current or former counties, such as Lancashire. No sub-national life expectancy figures are available for time periods before 1991–1993, because of constitutional and boundary changes to administrative areas during the 1990s.

Life expectancy at birth (years) for the north west Government office region and Chorley local authority, 1991–93 to 2001–03

	Male	*Female*
North west		
1991–93	72.4	77.9
1994–96	73.1	78.5
1997–99	73.6	78.6
2001–03	74.8	79.5
Chorley		
1991–93	73.1	78.2
1994–96	74.3	79.3
1997–99	74.1	79.2
2001–03	76.3	79.9

North Durham

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have benefited from the minimum wage in North Durham since its inception. [214678]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Kevan Jones, dated 8 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people have benefited from the minimum wage in North Durham since its inception. I am replying on his behalf. (214678)

Estimates for the number of jobs paid below the minimum wage for Parliamentary Constituencies are not available. However, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) calculates estimates of the number of jobs paid less than national minimum wage rates for the United Kingdom and Government Office Regions. A guide to measuring low pay and associated articles and data can be found on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 5837&Pos = 1&ColRank = 1&Rank = 272

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in North Durham will benefit from new child trust fund. [214682]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the child trust fund.

Pensioner Concessions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide the necessary funding to the relevant Government Department to permit the provision of *(a)* free television licences and *(b)* free off peak travel to all pensioners; and if he will estimate the cost of making each such provision in each of the next three years. [214002]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor announced the introduction of free TV licences for those over 75 in his 2000 pre-Budget report and these have been available since November 2000. 3.4 million pensioner households benefit.

The Transport Act 2000 brought in the statutory minimum requirement for local authority concessionary fares to ensure that older and disabled people are entitled to half fares or better on their local bus services, with no additional charge being levied for the pass. Anything provided above the statutory minimum is a matter for local authorities.

There are no current plans to extend these measures and no detailed estimates have been made of the likely costs.

Public Sector Staff

Mr. Soames: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate the Government have made of the number of people who work in the public sector. [214012]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Nicholas Soames, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the number of people who work in the public sector. (214012)

The most recent public sector figures published by the Office for National Statistics on the basis of National Accounts definitions were published in the article 'Jobs in the public sector: mid -2003' in the July 2004 issue of 'Labour Market Trends'.

Drawing upon this source, the estimated number of UK jobs in the public sector in June 2003 was 5,454,000 jobs.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will assess the *(a)* total costs and *(b)* total benefits to date of the modernisation of stamp duty; and whether those costs and benefits are in line with the estimates made in the regulatory impact assessment published in March 2004. [214725]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest estimate of the actual cost of MSD, in 2003–04, is £26.3 million, including pre- and post-implementation IT costs and the various business change costs. This is in line with the costs of £25 million to £30 million estimated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment.

We currently estimate that yield achieved in 2004–05 was £225 million higher than 2003–04 as a result of the modernisation of stamp duty. This is consistent with the £210 million increase in yield between 2003–04 and 2004–05 forecast as a result of the measures, as shown in Table A2.1 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report 2003.

Tax Credits

Mr. Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of what proportion of those in receipt of tax credits in *(a)* Wirral South and *(b)* the UK have been subject to overpayment demands. [214009]

Dawn Primarolo: Details of how overpayments are recovered are provided in the Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit." Wherever practical overpayments are recovered out of future tax credit payments. Where an award of tax credits has ceased and there remains an overpayment to be recovered, the Inland Revenue issues claimants with a 'Notice to Pay'. The claimant has the option to choose to pay back an overpayment over 12 months.

Information on the number of households in Wirral South sent notices to pay is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the number of cases of official error in the payment of tax credits in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; how many of these cases are still awaiting repayment of monies due from the Inland Revenue; and if he will make a statement. [213892]

Dawn Primarolo: By end December 2004 about 78,000 households had returned Form TC846, or had otherwise been recorded as requesting the write-off of their overpayments on grounds of official error. About 41,000 requests had been decided by that date, and about 1,600 families had their overpayments written off for that reason. That left 37,000 cases yet to be decided. Whether these remaining cases have their overpayment written off on the grounds of official error will depend upon the circumstances of each individual case.

Details of when an overpayment may be written off can be found Code of Practice 26 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?'

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his latest estimate is of the Inland Revenue's percentage accuracy rate for processing and calculating tax credit awards for 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [213962]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for High Peak (Tom Levitt), on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 407W.

The Department expects the level of processing accuracy in the current year to be markedly better than last year, in line with its target to decide 90 per cent. of tax credit claims, changes and renewals accurately. It will publish its performance against the current year's target in its Annual Report in due course.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the cost of managing and paying all tax credits in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [213965]

Dawn Primarolo: For the cost of managing and paying working families' and disabled person's tax credits in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03 I refer the hon. Member to page 101 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report for the year ending 31 March 2003. This can be found on the Inland Revenue web site, at www.ir.gov.uk/pdfs/report2003.pdf.

For the cost of managing and paying working and child tax credits in *(c)* 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to page 104 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts for that year. This can be found on the Inland Revenue web site, at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/pdfs/report2004.pdf.

The actual cost for *(d)* 2004–05 will appear in the Annual Report for that year.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people received *(a)* working family tax credits and *(b)* child tax credits in Easington constituency; and if he will make a statement. [214456]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses, December 2004." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Helen Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Warrington, North are claiming tax credits; and what the average award for each credit is. [214963]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of in-work families receiving tax credits (broken down by families with and without children) in each constituency appear in "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics. Geographical analyses." This can be found on the Inland Revenue website at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm. The estimates are based on a sample of cases, and are subject to sampling uncertainty.

Information on the average value of awards is not available.

Taxable Incomes

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many taxpayers received taxable incomes in excess of £50,000 in the last year for which figures are available. [215358]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to table 3.3 'Distribution of total income before and after tax, 1998–99 to 2004–05' on the Inland Revenue website www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/stats/income_distribution/table3_3_december04.xls

The table shows the number of income taxpayers with total income of £50,000 or more.

Unemployment

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of unemployment was in North Durham in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214194]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Kevan Jones, dated 8 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (214194)

Table 1 gives estimates of the numbers of unemployed people, who were resident in the North Durham Parliamentary Constituency, for the twelve month periods ending in February 1997, February 2001 and February 2004.

These estimates from Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for local areas. Table 2 gives the annual average number of claimants resident in the North Durham constituency for the year 1997, 2001 and 2004.

Table 1: Unemployed people resident in North Durham parliamentary constituency

12 months ending February each year	*Number*
1997	3,000
2001	2,000
2004	3,000

Note:
These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.
Source:
ONS Labour Force Survey

Table 2: JSA claimants resident in the North Durham constituency

Annual averages	*Claimants*
1997	2,583
2001	1,604
2004	1,071

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system.

Working Tax Credit

Paul Holmes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what proportion of the relevant working population claim the disability and severe disability elements within the working tax credit, broken down by *(a)* local authority and *(b)* parliamentary constituency. [214637]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of families claiming disabled worker elements within the working tax credit, I refer the hon. Member to my reply on 19 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 589W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Morley and Rothwell (Mr. Challen).

No estimates are available of the number of families eligible for these tax credits elements.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the distribution of eligible child care costs is, in £20 bands, among in-work families benefiting from the child care element of the working tax credit who *(a)* have a child aged under five years, *(b)* do not have a child aged under five years but have a child aged under 10 years and *(c)* do not have a child aged under 10 years. [214785]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: The distribution for families benefiting at 3 December 2004 is shown in the following table.

The figures are estimates and therefore subject to sampling uncertainty.

Families benefiting from the child care element at 3 December 2004[1]

Thousand

Eligible weekly child care costs allowed[2]	*At least one child under 5*[3]	*No child under 5 but at least one child under 10*[3]	*Only children aged 10 and over*[3]	*All*
Under £20	11.7	21.8	7.6	41.1
£20-£39.99	24.5	29.1	7.4	61.0
£40-£59.99	33.7	19.3	3.7	56.7
£60-£79.99	31.3	10.8	*1.6	43.7
£80-£99.99	30.2	7.0	*1.0	38.2
£100-£119.99	26.3	4.2	*0.4	30.9
£120-£139.99[2]	31.0	3.5	*0.6	35.1
£140 and over[2]	20.8	3.4	*0.4	24.6
Total	209.5	99.0	22.8	331.3

[1] Based on a 20 per cent. sample of couples and a 10 per cent. sample of single adults receiving tax credits. Subject to sampling uncertainty—see 'Child and Working Tax Credits Statistics. December 2004'. Figures marked * are subject to particularly high relative uncertainty.

[2] Taking account of the maximum costs allowable for a family with one child for whom eligible costs are incurred.

[3] Ages of all children in the family, not just those for whom childcare costs are incurred.

Mrs. May: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the financial effects of changing the subsidy rate in the child care element of the working tax credit *(a)* to (i) 50 per cent., (ii) 25 per cent. and (iii) 0 per cent. in 2005–06 and *(b)* to (A) 50 per cent., (B) 25 per cent. and (C) 0 per cent. in (1) 2006–07, (2) 2007–08 and (3) 2008–09 (X) gross and (Y) net of offsetting changes on other means-tested benefits and taxes. [214786]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: No separate forecast is made of expenditure on the child care element of working tax credits.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Violence

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* incidents of violence against the person and *(b)* police emergency call-outs resulting from incidents occurring (i) on and (ii) in the vicinity of premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises under the Licensing Act 1964 there were in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [212059]

Ms Blears: The numbers of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises in 2003–04 are given in the table. Details on the number of police emergency call-outs resulting from incidents occurring (i) on and (ii) in the vicinity of premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption are not available centrally.

Number of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises, 2003–04

Police force area	*Violent offences committed*
Avon and Somerset	2,574
Bedfordshire	762
Cambridgeshire	750
Cheshire	806
Cleveland	1,615
Cumbria	600
Derbyshire	n/a
Devon and Cornwall	3,580
Dorset	752
Durham	n/a
Dyfed-Powys	816
Essex	1,756
Gloucestershire	864
Greater Manchester	1,620
Gwent	791
Hampshire	2,417
Hertfordshire	1,005
Humberside	1,007
Kent	813
Lancashire	3,910
Leicestershire	1,323
Lincolnshire	607
London, City of	151
Merseyside	n/a
Metropolitan Police	n/a
Norfolk	540
Northamptonshire	1,043
Northumbria	1,767
North Wales	967
North Yorkshire	1,124
Nottinghamshire	n/a
South Wales	2,895
South Yorkshire	1,581
Staffordshire	2,424
Suffolk	993
Surrey	794
Sussex	n/a
Thames Valley	2,146
Warwickshire	n/a
West Mercia	882
West Midlands	4,140
West Yorkshire	2,017
Wiltshire	373
Total	52,205

ASBOs

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in the City of Durham since their inception. [214367]

Ms Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. From commencement, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), the Home Office has been notified of nine ASBOs issued within the City of Durham.

Data up to 30 September 2004 will be available shortly.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been made by courts within the Greater London area in each of the last three years. [214390]

Ms Blears: The available information, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), is given in the table.

The number of ASBOs issued in Greater London, at all courts, as reported to the Home Office, by period

1 July to 30 June	*Number*
2001–02	11
2002–03	38
2003–04 (latest available)	183
Total	232

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice he issues to his officials in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate regarding treatment of foreign nationals who have been refused asylum in the UK but who are then denied entry into their country of origin. [210905]

Mr. Browne: Instructions to immigration officers are set out as operational best practice. In the circumstances set out above immigration officers will:

> Consider any other application for leave to enter in accordance with the rules.
>
> Determine if any new application for asylum meets the criteria to be fast-tracked and certified under existing legislation. Where a claim has been certified, immigration officers will refuse entry and direct removal back to the applicant's country of origin. Where the application is not certified, immigration officers will screen the applicant and refer to the Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) asylum caseworkers to consider the fresh asylum application.

The IND continues to work closely with a number of countries of origin to secure returns arrangements. On a bilateral basis, these may be informal Memoranda of Understanding or formal readmission agreements. We also work within the framework of the ED to conclude EC Readmission Agreements.

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those detained under anti-terrorist measures *(a)* were seeking asylum at the time of their detention and *(b)* have subsequently claimed asylum. [213186]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 1 February 2005]*: Between 11 September 2001 and 31 December 2004, police and Home Office records show that a total of 717 people were detained under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Many have since been released. Of the 182 identified in Home Office records as having applied for asylum, 166 had claimed asylum prior to arrest, and 16 subsequently.

British Citizens Killed Abroad

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will extend Criminal Injuries Compensation Board payments to include British citizens who are killed abroad. [201746]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 6 December 2004]*: The British Government are not liable for injuries caused to British Citizens by the criminal acts of others abroad.

European Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 makes it clear that, within the European Union, responsibility for paying compensation to victims of violent intentional crime rests with the competent authority of the member state on whose territory the crime was committed. We believe that principle holds good in respect of crimes of violence committed in non-EU countries, and we have no plans to extend the territorial scope of the Great Britain Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme.

British nationals or residents injured abroad should accordingly look for compensation to the perpetrator, to whatever insurance arrangements they may have made, or to the State where the criminal injury occurred.

Burglary (Homeowners)

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have been charged with offences arising from the defence of their home against a burglar or other intruder in each of the past five years; how many prosecutions were successful; how many persons were sentenced to a term of imprisonment; and how many convictions were subsequently overturned. [205260]

Paul Goggins: Statistics for persons charged with crimes are not collected centrally nor is it possible to identify those persons prosecuted for offences arising from the defence of their home, as the circumstances surrounding an offence are not collected centrally on the Home Office Court Proceedings database.

The Director of Public Prosecutions would look for clear evidence of excessive force before considering a prosecution. The Crown Prosecution Service and the Association of Chief Police Officers together issued guidance for householders on Tuesday 1 February, which explains in plain language the rights of a person if faced with an intruder.

Cash in Transit Vehicles

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the Government's strategy is for preventing attacks on cash in transit vehicles; [213592]

(2) what assessment he has made of regional variations in police response times to cash in transit vehicle attacks; and what strategies he intends to put in place to reduce regional variations; [213593]

(3) what research has been carried out into how cash stolen in cash in transit attacks is used by organised crime. [213594]

(4) what the average sentence was for individuals convicted of cash in transit attacks in each of the last five years. [213595]

Ms Blears: The Home Office has been in discussion with the British Securities Industry Association and police to reduce cash-in- transit robberies. The industry has committed itself to tackling this crime through the spread of good practice and the use of technology to protect cash-in-transit deliveries, the industry is also working closely with the police to share intelligence relating to cash-in-transit robberies.

Statistics on police response times to cash-in-transit vehicle attacks and average sentences for individuals convicted of cash in transit attacks are not held centrally. We are not aware of any research into how cash stolen in cash-in-transit attacks is used.

CCTV

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will provide further funding for CCTV schemes in Lancashire. [213905]

Ms Blears: There are currently funds available under the Building Safer Communities Funds for a range of crime reduction initiatives. The Building Safer Communities fund is allocated by the Home Office to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) to enable them to tackle local crime priorities through a number of interventions, including CCTV. For 2004–05 the Building Safer Communities fund has provided £74 million for Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships in England and Wales. It is open to the CDRPs in Lancashire to decide whether they wish to include CCTV projects in their spending plans. In addition, the Basic Command Unit (BCU) Fund for police commanders may be used for CCTV provision if regarded as a priority locally.

Child Curfew Schemes

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child curfew schemes under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 have been established in each year since their introduction. [214067]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* No applications have been received to establish a local child curfew scheme under section 14 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The powers contained in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 for the dispersal of groups and the removal of persons under 16 to their place of residence have been used to in preference to this power.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 11 October from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Ms Pauline Clear. [212279]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 2 December 2004.

Curfew Orders

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many curfew orders with electronic monitoring were made by the courts in England and Wales in each of the last three financial years. [203828]

Paul Goggins: The total number of curfew orders with electronic monitoring made by the courts in each of the last three financial years was:

Financial year	*Orders made*
2001–02	6,900
2002–03	11,342
2003–04	18,296

Custody Plans/Prisoner Passports

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to make it mandatory for all prisons to provide custody plans or prisoner passports; and if he will estimate the cost of doing so. [212152]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans to make it mandatory for prisons to provide custody plans or prisoner passports, which are mainly used for adults serving short sentences and focus on resettlement issues. No estimates of the cost of doing this have been made. Extending the OASys offender assessment system to short-term prisoners will be reviewed as part of the preparations for the introduction of Custody Plus, under the Criminal Justice Act 2003.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. Peter Atkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many departmental mobile telephones were used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials in his Department in each year since 1997, and at what cost; how many such telephones were lost or stolen in each year since 1997; and what the replacement costs were in each case. [202749]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Detailed records on mobile telephony are not held centrally and in order to obtain the information required would incur disproportionate costs.

I can however provide information on mobile phones, associated equipment and call and access charges associated with mobile telephony procurement made by the Commercial Directorate (previously CAPU) since 1997 which is as follows.

Time period/ financial year	*Comment*	*Cost (£)*
1997–98	Central spend on equipment and tariffs only.	283.39
1998–99	Central spend on equipment and tariffs only.	17,120.77
1999–2000	Central spend on equipment and tariffs only.	83,051.59
2000–01	Central spend on equipment and tariffs. Includes IND equipment and tariff costs for mobile telephony relating to the Automated Fingerprint Identification System project procured centrally by CARD.	394,063.11
2001–02	Central spend on equipment and tariffs only.	51,738.03
2002–03	Total cost comprises total equipment, tariff and call charges from Vodafone including IND.	1,131,775.30
2003–04	Total cost comprises [a] total mobile charges from Vodafone including IND and [b] Orange equipment and tariff costs only (Non-IND).	1,489,460.40
2004–05	Total cost comprises [a] total mobile charges from Vodafone including IND and [b] Orange equipment and tariff costs only (Non-IND).	1,372,788.30

Notes:

On figures provided:

1. The figures represent expenditure incurred on behalf of the Home Department including IND (where available) by Commercial Directorate (previously CAPU) excluding Executive Agencies and NDPBs.

2. The figures supersede those provided in response to previous Parliamentary Questions regarding mobile telephony. The figures previously did not include call charging and access detail and were taken from a manual record system held by Commercial Directorate and not the central purchasing database.

Drugs

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people are undertaking drug rehabilitation under drug treatment and testing orders. [211228]

Paul Goggins: There were eight, 404 Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) current in England and Wales at 30 November 2004.

It is a requirement of the DTTO that the offender submits to drug treatment during the whole of the order.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have failed to complete Drug Treatment and Testing Order programmes since they were introduced. [211232]

Paul Goggins: 14,109 Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) were not completed between October 2000, when the order was rolled-out to courts across England and Wales, and November 2004. Of these 8,340 were revoked because of a failure to comply with the order, 4, 285 for conviction of another offence(s) and 1,484 for other reasons (e.g. ill health, death of the offender, offender started employment, training or education).

The proportion of offenders successfully completing DTTOs is rising. A DTTO completion target for 2004–05 of 35 per cent. was introduced from April 2004. Performance against this target across the Probation Service for the period April to November 2004 was 34 per cent. compared with 30 per cent. in the two-year reconviction study of offenders in the three DTTO pilot areas.

Fear of Crime

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of links between media publications and fear of crime. [213352]

Ms Blears: The 2002–03 British Crime Survey showed a relationship between newspaper readership and worry about types of crime. For example, reading tabloid newspapers regularly was a significant predictive factor of having a high level of worry about violent crime.

Work continues in the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate to investigate the correlation between media reporting and fear of crime data within the British Crime Survey.

In addition, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are encouraged to engage with their local media to promote balanced reporting of stories affecting local communities.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices for public nuisance under chapter 1, part 1 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 have been issued by *(a)* Essex and *(b)* Southend community support officers in each year since their inception. [209476]

Ms Blears: It is not currently possible from the statistics collected centrally on penalty notices for disorder to distinguish those issued by community support officers from those issued by police officers. Action is being taken to provide such a distinction in the next few months.

57,607 (a provisional figure) penalty notices for disorder have been issued nationally during the calendar year 2004.

Futurebuilders fund

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the beneficiaries of the Futurebuilders scheme to date; [214709]

(2) how much has been awarded from the Futurebuilders fund; and how much is budgeted for distribution in the next five years. [214710]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: Futurebuilders will be announcing their first investments early this year. Further announcements of investment decisions will be made by Futurebuilders in due course.

The Government funding allocated to Futurebuilders for 2004–05 was £57 million and will be £58 million for 2005–06. These sums are in addition to the £10 million which was allocated for 2003–04, at the start up of the project.

Ministers are currently considering budget allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 and a final decision will be announced in due course.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who initiated the Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration in Westminster Hall on 27 January; and if he will make a statement on the role played by the BBC in the arrangements. [212226]

Fiona Mactaggart: After consulting its steering group of interested parties and the BBC about an appropriate venue, the Home Office approached the relevant authorities for permission to use Westminster Hall.

Following the successful precedent of the first Holocaust Memorial Day event in 2001, which the BBC and Home Office jointly created and staged and the BBC televised, the Home Office decided to invite the BBC to fulfil the same role for the 60th Anniversary event. The BBC undertook the event production work on a cost only basis, producing the event to Home Office requirements, in consultation with the steering group and within BBC editorial guidelines.

Homicide

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to establish categories of homicide, other than justifiable homicide, that do not automatically carry a life sentence upon conviction; and if he will make a statement. [207245]

Paul Goggins: A review of the law of homicide was announced on 27 October 2004. The terms of reference for the review will be placed before the House shortly.

Human Trafficking

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedure is followed on the discovery of victims of human trafficking; and if he will make a statement. [213567]

Mr. Browne: The United Kingdom Immigration Service has clearly defined practices for the identification and handling of victims of trafficking in human beings. Guidance on the procedure to be followed by immigration officers states that

> "It is important that immigration officers, who may be the first contact point for victims (especially child victims claiming asylum), provide full details on the victim along with any relevant intelligence information to Social Services Departments and to the police so that the victims can receive adequate protection".

A specialist pan-London Immigration Service unit leads on operations concerning the vice trade and works closely with the Metropolitan Police Service Central Clubs and Vice Unit, where officers are also experienced in working with victims. Smaller units with immigration officers who also receive training in the identification of victims of trafficking have also been established.

Where individuals are arrested during the course of police or immigration operations, they are generally taken to a police station to be interviewed. The initial interview seeks to establish the individual's status and circumstances. During any initial police interview officers will seek to establish whether there may be other victims in need of protection.

Where a victim of trafficking is eligible for support through the POPPY Scheme, a referral is made and Immigration Service interviews are conducted on the premises of Eaves Housing for Women, the current service provider. While there is no requirement for a victim to speak to the police during the first four weeks on the POPPY Scheme, the victim may choose to do so. Information provided may add to the intelligence picture or provide a basis for further investigation.

Following the initial immigration service interview and any police interview, workers at the POPPY Scheme undertake a needs and risk assessment and develop a support package for each victim.

Identity Cards

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 115–16W, on identity cards, when a decision will be made on the number and location of centres where biometric information may be recorded; and what assessment has been made of the feasibility and cost of using mobile equipment to collect this information. [213532]

Mr. Browne: Decisions on the number and location of centres where biometric information may be recorded will be made in the procurement phase of the programme expected to conclude by 2007 during which time feasibility and cost issues will have been thoroughly evaluated. Mobile equipment was used during the biometric enrolment pilot to assess the public's reaction to this type of equipment.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the expected cost is of each of the individual departments and units that *(a)* are already established and *(b)* are planned to be established within the National Offender Management Service. [201056]

Paul Goggins: The 2005–06 budget which will be managed by the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) totals £4,050 million resource and £320 million capital. This includes expenditure by the Youth Justice Board, Prison Service, probation service and the Correctional Services Head Quarters.

We cannot yet provide 2005–06 budgets for each of the individual areas within NOMS as we are currently designing a new headquarters structure which includes transferring a number of units (and their budgets) from the organisations that make up the service to NOMS Head Quarters. A detailed proposal showing the allocation of individual units to NOMS Head Quarters Directorates has been put forward to staff and trade unions for their comments. This restructuring of NOMS

Head Quarters is due to be finalised in April 2005, thereafter separate budgets for the organisations and Directorates within NOMS will be agreed.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when regional offender managers will assume responsibility for budgets in the Prison and Probation Services. [201714]

Paul Goggins: In 2005–06, budget allocations for probation areas will be endorsed by regional offender managers (ROMs). In 2006–07, budget allocations for probation areas and the Prison Service will be agreed by ROMs

OASys IT System

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 326W, on the OASys IT System, what estimate he has made of the cost of OASys assessments for those young adult offenders aged 18 to 20 years sentenced to fewer than 12 months imprisonment. [212147]

Paul Goggins: We estimate the additional cost of completing OASys assessments for this group at around £282,000.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were subject to OASys assessments in the last 12 months. [212148]

Paul Goggins: Prison Service records identify 13,546 offenders as receiving one or more OASys assessments for the 12 months from 1 January to 31 December 2004. This figure includes offenders with OASys assessments completed by Cheshire Probation Area—the first area to be linked electronically with prisons.

National Probation Service records identify 244,582 as having received one or more electronic OASys assessments completed by probation staff between October 2002 and mid January 2005. The configuration of the probation OASys IT system does not allow figures to be produced for the 12 months of 2004 alone without incurring disproportionate cost. However, the great majority of the electronic assessments were completed in 2004. In addition there were several thousand assessments completed on the paper-based system which the IT progressively replaced, but these are not counted. addition there were several thousand assessments completed on the paper-based system which the IT progressively replaced, but these are not counted.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of operating the OASys system has been in the last 12 months. [212149]

Paul Goggins: The funding allocated to meet the additional cost of operating the OASys offender assessment system for the 12 months period from 1 January to 31 December 2004 was £10,182,000.

The following table shows the breakdown between the Prison Service (HMPS) and the national probation service (NPS) and between operational and IT support costs. The figures do not include development costs for new software or project costs for establishing and implementing the projects and programme.

£ million

	HMPS	*NPS*	*Total*
Operational	5.94	3.12	9.06
IT support costs	0.51	0.61	1.12
Total	6.45	3.73	10.18

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to his answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 326W, on the OASys IT System, if he will list those prisons which provide custody plans or prisoner passports for adults serving short sentences; [212150]

(2) how many prisoners have been subject to custody plans or prisoner passports; and what percentage such prisoners represent of adults serving short sentences. [212151]

Paul Goggins: All prisoners serving sentences of 12 months or more are required to have an individual sentence plan, which is now included within OASys.

Following local initiatives some prisons provide "Custody" plans or "passports", which focus on resettlement issues, for prisoners serving under 12-month sentences. No central record is available of the number of prisoners on these schemes.

Offender Management

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which agency is responsible, where an offender is a danger to himself, his immediate family and the wider public, for ensuring that the offender *(a)* does not re-offend, *(b)* receives the requested medical treatment and *(c)* has stable and permanent accommodation; and what the role of his Department is. [201563]

Paul Goggins: An offender under current probation supervision is allocated an offender manager who is responsible for assessing the risk of harm posed by that individual. The offender manager will develop a supervision plan which is directly aimed at reducing the risk of re-offending. Where there is any indication that medical treatment may be required, the offender manager can direct the offender to local health services, whose responsibility it is to provide any necessary service. The offender manager cannot seek to enforce compliance with treatment unless it is a specific requirement of their supervision. Similarly with accommodation, local authorities are required to ensure that advice and information is made available about an individual's right to apply for housing, and to provide assistance where necessary. The probation service has a role in signposting offenders to local authority advice services, and can refer those who need additional housing support to local services run under the Supporting People Programme. In addition, there is a limited supply of approved accommodation available for those offenders who pose the greatest risk of harm.

Offenders with multiple problems will demand the expertise of a number of agencies. The Government are committed to enhanced partnership working and special arrangements have been put in place for the supervision of those offenders who represent the greatest risk of harm. These arrangements, known as Multi-Agency

Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) ensure that key agencies come together with others under the lead of the probation, prison and police services to plan and monitor the supervision of individuals. The key agencies, including local housing authorities and health Trusts and Authorities, have been placed under a duty to co-operate with their local police, prison and probation services.

Passports

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 121–2W, on passports, when a final decision will be made on the number of interview offices; and what steps he has taken to investigate the practicality of mobile facilities for remote areas. [213771]

Mr. Browne: I expect to be in a position to make a decision in April this year on the number of locations in which interview offices will be required. As part of a programme of consultations on the sitting of offices, the UK Passport Service (UKPS) will be visiting Highlands and Islands Enterprise for discussions in early March. The UKPS will also visit mobile facilities in Scotland belonging to the Driving Standards Agency. A critical issue will be the standard of security required in mobile units for the handling and transmission of personal data. The UKPS is currently investigating this.

Police

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whom Government offices of the regions consult when setting crime reduction targets for each police authority; [213752]

(2) if he will list the targets set for Sussex police by *(a)* the police authority, *(b)* the Government offices of the region and *(c)* the crime reduction partnership. [213753]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The Government offices for the regions (GOs) do not set crime reduction targets for police authorities, for police forces or for crime and disorder reduction partnerships (CDRPs).

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires CDRPs to publish three-yearly crime and disorder reduction strategies which include specific targets for reducing crime in their areas. The next round of strategies is due to be published by 1 April 2005. A key function of GOs is to support delivery of Government business in the regions, and in line with this role, I have asked them to work with CDRPs to ensure that the local targets agreed make an appropriate contribution to national delivery of the new Home Office Public Service Agreement (PSA) 1. This PSA requires a reduction in crime by 15 per cent., and more in high-crime areas, by 2007–08.

On the basis of advice from the Home Office, GOs' approach to this task has been to suggest to each CDRP a target "range" for which they should be aiming. The range suggested to an individual CDRP depends upon the level of crime in their area. CDRPs with higher crime levels are expected to achieve greater reductions than those in lower crime areas.

Guidance on this process was issued to CDRPs on 7 December 2004, copied to chief constables and police authorities. In addition, the National Policing Plan published in November 2004 explicitly highlighted the need for GOs, police and CDRPs to collaborate closely in agreeing measures to achieve PSA 1. The National Policing Plan 2005–08 is available on the police reform website at www.policereform.gov.uk.

As key members of CDRPs it is for police authorities to ensure that police performance requirements and CDRP targets are directed at achieving reductions in crime and improvements in performance. Chris Fox, chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers, recently sent a letter to chief constables clarifying the links between the Police Performance Assessment Framework (PPAF) and the requirement for CDRPs to set challenging targets. Many CDRPs across the country have now agreed targets with their GO with which all CDRP members—including the police—are satisfied.

Copies of all the documents referred to in this reply will be placed in the Library.

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of officers of inspector rank and above in each constabulary are *(a)* women and *(b)* from ethnic minorities, broken down by rank. [213767]

Ms Blears: The latest information on police strength was published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 13/04, "Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2004".

The bulletin can be found on the following website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1 .html.

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what programmes are in place within the police service to develop the skills of officers of inspector rank and above. [213768]

Ms Blears: As part of the Government's police reform programme, there are several programmes available to officers at the rank of inspector and above which enhance policing and leadership skills. These programmes promote ongoing development and present an integrated approach to police training.

The Core Leadership Development Programme (CLDP) is available to officers up to and including the rank of inspector. The emphasis of the programme is on personal and professional development of both leadership and management. The goal is to improve individual performance and ability to effectively deliver an improved service, both internally and within the community.

The Senior Leadership Development Programme (SLDP) is aimed at commanders and their teams, for all types of command and management units—operational or support. The programme provides further leadership development for police officers with independent command and management responsibilities, including those aspiring to join the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and looking to go to PNAC (the Police National Assessment Centre).

SLDP leads on to the strategic command course, which prepares officers for promotion into ACPO ranks.

In addition to these central programmes, the Professionalising Investigations Programme (PIP) has been developed to examine existing investigation procedures and develop ways to make the process more professional, ethical and effective for both officers and support staff involved in investigations at all levels, including the management of investigations.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average age is of serving police officers, broken down by *(a)* rank and *(b)* police force area. [210021]

Ms Blears: It is not possible to calculate average age from the information available centrally. Available data show that, of the 140,070 officers in post in England and Wales police forces on 31 March 2004, 14,148 (or 10 per cent.) were aged 25 or under; 75,309 (or 54 per cent.) were aged 26 to 40; 50,028 (or 36 per cent.) were aged 41 to 55; and 585 (or 0.4 per cent.) were over 55.

A full breakdown of numbers of officers in these age bands, by rank and police force area, is shown in the following table.

Age type by force for all ranks

Headcount

	Age type				
Forces	*25 and under*	*26 to 40*	*41 to 55*	*Over 55*	*Total*
Avon and Somerset	336	1,911	1,196	18	3,461
Bedfordshire	195	605	406	9	1,215
Cambridgeshire	146	770	506	4	1,426
Cheshire	184	1,257	774	5	2,220
Cleveland	165	873	667	6	1,711
Cumbria	102	697	465	0	1,264
Derbyshire	193	1,123	776	10	2,102
Devon and Cornwall	176	1,844	1,339	7	3,366
Dorset	116	753	596	12	1,477
Durham	117	979	613	5	1,714
Dyfed-Powys	50	644	479	7	1,180
Essex	406	1,696	1,048	15	3,165
Gloucestershire	124	700	493	4	1,321
Greater Manchester	907	4,450	2,781	18	8,156
Gwent	111	810	464	4	1,389
Hampshire	354	2,060	1,394	17	3,825
Hertfordshire	360	1,152	629	4	2,145
Humberside	187	1,148	910	11	2,256
Kent	441	1,961	1,241	31	3,674
Lancashire	223	1,997	1,392	5	3,617
Leicestershire	237	1,291	786	6	2,320
Lincolnshire	59	634	543	11	1,247
London, City of	60	452	346	3	861
Merseyside	243	2,028	1,882	10	4,163
Metropolitan Police	4,013	16,052	10,142	178	30,385
Norfolk	101	844	600	5	1,550
Northamptonshire	89	699	489	5	1,282
Northumbria	241	2,313	1,527	12	4,093
North Wales	108	940	616	5	1,669
North Yorkshire	125	832	582	6	1,545
Nottinghamshire	249	1,347	923	18	2,537
South Wales	240	1,954	1,130	9	3,333
South Yorkshire	220	1,898	1,198	18	3,334
Staffordshire	201	1,377	738	5	2,321
Suffolk	135	753	438	5	1,331
Surrey	200	1,092	662	13	1,967
Sussex	403	1,724	1,012	6	3,145
Thames Valley	544	2,100	1,486	19	4,149
Warwickshire	105	517	396	3	1,021
West Mercia	208	1,226	942	9	2,385
West Midlands	961	4,473	2,668	23	8,125
West Yorkshire	434	2,643	2,274	19	5,370
Wiltshire	79	690	479	5	1,253
Total	14,148	75,309	50,028	585	140,070

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the review of the police grant formula will be completed. [214448]

Ms Blears: We are taking this work forward with the help of the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of Police Authorities, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and officials from the National Assembly of Wales. Consultation on the new formula will take place this summer with the aim of introducing a revised formula for the 2006–07 police funding settlement.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the Police Best

Value Performance indicators for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04. [204206]

Ms Blears: Police authorities are statutorily required to publish data on best value performance indicators in local annual policing plans plus annual reports. Full police force area comparisons of the key indicators are published in the Home Office's annual Police Performance Monitoring volume and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's annual report. Measures specifically relating to crime, detections and police numbers are also published in the Home Office's annual statistical bulletins 'Crime in England and Wales' and 'Police Service Strength, England and Wales'.

These can be found on websites:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html

http://www.policereform.gov.uk/psu/performancemonitors.html and

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/hmic/annual.html

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the procedure for carrying out a police search of a private residence. [213316]

Ms Blears: The Code of Practice (Code B) for searches of premises by police officers and the seizure of property found by police officers on persons or premises, issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), deals with police powers to search premises.

Code B requires that police officers should consider if the necessary objectives of entry and search of premises can be met by less intrusive means. Officers should exercise their powers courteously and with respect for persons and property; and only use reasonable force when this is considered necessary and proportionate.

Code B recognises that on some occasions it may be necessary to enter premises at an unsociable hour where it is considered that access at any other time might frustrate the purpose of the search. Premises may be searched only to the extent necessary to achieve the object of the search, having regard to the size and nature of whatever is sought.

The officer conducting the search under Code B is required, unless it is impracticable to do so, provide the occupier with a copy of a notice in a standard format. This notice, amongst other things, should summarising the authority under which the search is being made, details of compensation procedures, explain the rights of the occupier and the rights of the owner of any property seized.

Copies of Code B and the other PACE Codes can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crimpol/police/system/pacecodes.html. The Codes must be readily available at all police stations.

Prisons

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Crown immunity was removed from HM Prison Service. [208802]

Paul Goggins: Crown immunity has not been removed from Her Majesty's Prison Service. The service's aim is to comply with all statutory legislation taking into account overriding security needs and potential impact.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vacancies for staff in prison establishments there were on the latest date for which figures are available; how many staff are working out their notice period; how many staff in prison establishments are expected to retire before 1 April 2005; and how many staff he estimates are required to fill all posts at prison establishments. [206499]

Paul Goggins: Record numbers of prison officers have been recruited to the public sector Prison Service during 2003 and 2004. 2,420 officers were recruited in 2003 (an increase of 50.5 per cent. on 2002), and 1,983 officers were recruited in 2004. At 31 December 2004 23,822 operational staff (prison officers, senior officers and principal officers) were employed at prison establishments against an operational staffing requirement of 24,682. In addition, the equivalent of 473 officers were available for operational duty through the contract supplementary hours scheme. Overall, operational staffing availability was therefore just 1.6 per cent. below the operational staffing requirement, which the Director General considers to be an acceptable operating margin.

For all grades of staff working in prison establishments (excluding Headquarters) there were 1,660 vacancies at 31 December 2004. This figure represents a snapshot and does not take into account new staff still in the recruitment process. A total of 46,533 staff (covering all grades) would need to have been employed in public sector prison establishments to fill all identified posts at 31 December 2004. Information on the number of staff working out their notice is not recorded centrally and could only be collected at disproportionate cost. Between 1 January 2005 and 1 April 2005, 72 staff are expected to retire. Staffing levels of contracted prisons are considered commercial in confidence and are therefore not available.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what grounds he will not publish the case he is making to the Treasury to close smaller prisons and build larger prisons. [201027]

Paul Goggins: We are preparing a detailed investment case to explore further with the Treasury, policy development and internal discussions on this programme are ongoing and involve commercially sensitive information.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the cost is of providing satellite television facilities to prisoners in Leicester prison; [211744]

(2) which prisons in the UK provide satellite television facilities for prisoners. [211746]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* Sky television is available to prisoners in association areas. The package costs £947.05 a month and is funded from the General Purposes fund which is financed primarily by contributions from members of the public and any profits from prisoner related activities such as the prison shop.

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the policy of the Prison Service is on faith-based offending behaviour initiatives; what the contractual arrangements at Dartmoor are under which an outside organisation is providing services of this kind; and how much in public funds *(a)* was spent in financial year 2003–04 and *(b)* is budgeted for (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06 in connection with such externally sourced faith-based initiatives. [213089]

Paul Goggins: All Offending Behaviour Initiatives within the Prison Service are subject to an evidence-based approach to tackling offending behaviour and must conform to the 'What Works' principles to reduce re-offending.

A Service Level Agreement has been drawn up between the governor of HMP Dartmoor and the Inner Change Freedom Initiative (IFI) for the IFI project, a religious intervention aimed at transforming prisoners' behaviour, building on a foundation that rests upon biblical principles. This is currently being reviewed according to procedures set out in PSO 4350—Effective Regimes Interventions.

Comprehensive details of the expenditure incurred by the Prison Service in supporting faith-based offending behaviour courses are not held centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of how the proposed purchaser/provider split for the probation service in England and Wales will affect the key objective of managing offenders efficiently, effectively and seamlessly. [205710]

Paul Goggins: The rationale for a purchaser provider split is contained in Lord Carter's review of correctional services. This split will enable the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) to drive up the quality of work with offenders. Individual offender managers will be the users of services commissioned by the national offender manager (NOM) or ROMs and accountable for the effective implementation of sentence plans.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* multi-agency public protection work, *(b)* drug treatment and testing supervision hostels and *(c)* probation work in prisons under the purchaser/provider model for the probation service in England and Wales will be part of the (i) offender management arm and (ii) interventions arm; and if he will make a statement. [205712]

Paul Goggins: Multi-agency public protection work, residential drug treatment and probation work in prisons all involve elements both of interventions and offender management. The national offender manager and the director general of the national probation service jointly issued guidance to probation boards in January 2005 on how they should implement offender management for community orders and licence cases. In implementing this model boards will distinguish offender management from intervention functions. Working closely in the course of 2005–06 they will develop the separation further (with the regional offender managers (ROMs)) to ensure a nationally consistent approach.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of opportunities for research or consulting disseminated by the Department resulted in *(a)* research reports and *(b)* physical deliverables in each year since 2001–02. [207006]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office conducts a range of social and physical science research and consulting activity to inform the development of the evidence base and support delivery.

Social science

Home Office Research, Development and Statistics (RDS) invite opportunities on commercial tenders for social research contracts. These contracts lead to the production of a final report.

Information on the percentage of tenders that result in publication of the final report is not available, but results are normally published on successful conclusion of the work. Some commercial tenders will result in more than one publication and some publications incorporate more than one external project as well as internal projects. In addition, some of the more recent projects are ongoing and so have not yet reached publication stage.

Physical science research

100 per cent. of work contracted out will meet its specification due to the expertise in setting the specification and monitoring progress of the work contracted out.

The figures on the percentage of funding on contracted out work for earlier years are not readily available, but all of this work resulted in a physical deliverable or report.

Consultancy contracts

In 2001–02 the Home Office awarded 145 management consultancy contracts of which 87 were competitively tendered and 58 were single tenders. This does not include professional services such as accountancy, legal services, scientific research and other professional services procured by the Home Office during 2001–02.

Following the National Audit Office (NAO) report "Purchasing Professional Services" the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) issued guidance that re-defined consultancy to include the purchasing of all professional services and not just management consultancy.

Sentencing Policy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will enable the formation of panels of local people to help to decide what form unpaid community work should take in their areas. [213350]

Paul Goggins: Local probation areas have always liaised with local communities in order to identify work which can usefully be undertaken by offenders. All areas survey those who benefit work undertaken by offenders to ensure that the nature and quality of the work help develop has met their needs; and they use this feedback to inform future work plans.

With the introduction of the new community order and the unpaid work requirement throughout the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the probation service is moving towards a much more structured approach to eliciting the views of local communities. In the course of February 2005, as part of a nationally co-ordinated "Clean-Up" campaign, residents in ten probation areas will be asked to vote on a number of possible projects to be undertaken in their locality. The work will then be undertaken in the order of priority identified by residents.

This desire to take greater account of the views of local people is reflected in the civil renewal strategy currently being developed by the National Offender Management Service. This explores ways in which the confidence of the public in community sentences can be increased. It is crucial that offenders make a visible contribution that can be identified by those in the community who benefit from it. Reparation marques, which indicate that pieces of work have been carried out by offenders, have been distributed across probation areas.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the comparative rates of detention of black men and white men. [213351]

Paul Goggins: On 28 February 2003, there were 51,427 white males and 10,850 black males held in prison establishments in England and Wales, as recorded on the Prison Service central IT system.

The latest available incarceration rates by ethnic group have been published in Figure 6.6 of 'Prison Statistics England and Wales 2001'. A copy of this publication is available in the Library.

Student Visa Extensions

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what data he collects on the quality of service international students receive while processing a visa extension. [214051]

Mr. Browne: Since the introduction of charges on 1 August 2003, we have for the most part been completing 70 per cent. of postal applications within three weeks of receiving them in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND).

We may not be able to complete applications within three weeks of receipt if they need further documents, inquiries or an interview, or if they are complex. We should normally deal with these within 13 weeks at most. A very small minority which are particularly complex or sensitive may take a little longer.

Those international students who use the Student Batch Scheme through their student advisers have their applications decided within three weeks or earlier. The percentage of Batch Scheme cases decided at the Initial Consideration Stage is much higher than average—approximately 90 per cent.

Tobacco Sales (Children)

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been in *(a)* South Yorkshire and *(b)* England of retailers for selling tobacco to under-age children in each of the last five years. [212263]

Paul Goggins: The information requested, relating to England and South Yorkshire police force area, 1999 to 2003, is given in the table.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for offences relating to the sale of cigarettes and tobacco products to underage persons[1]— England and South Yorkshire police force area, 1999 to 2003

Offence description	*Statute*	*Year*	*England*	*South Yorkshire PFA*
Sale of tobacco etc. to persons under 16	Children and Young Persons Act 1933, Sec. 7 as amended by Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991, Sec. 1	1999	112	11
		2000	153	1
		2001	105	1
		2002	85	—
		2003	107	—
Sale of unpackaged cigarettes	Childrens and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) Act 1991, Sec. 1	1999	3	—
		2000	1	—
		2001	2	—
		2002	1	—
		2003	1	—
	Total	1999	115	11
		2000	154	1
		2001	107	1
		2002	86	—
		2003	108	—

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[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

West Mercia Police

Mr. Paul Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the last appraisal was carried out of the chief constable for West Mercia police. [213312]

Ms Blears: Procedures for Performance and Development Reviews (PDRs) of chief police officers were established with effect from 1 April 2003.

The first formal appraisals were carried out in April 2004. The chief constable of West Mercia took up post in August 2003 and since then he has been subject to the normal cycle of appraisal by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for the South of England Region, with review meetings being held periodically throughout the year.

As a local arrangement, the West Mercia police authority also carries out an annual review of the chief constable taking account of the HMI's views as part of this process.

Work Permits

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were issued in 2004. [214069]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* 181,432 work permits were issued in 2004 for single and group applications (this number includes all group members individually). If an application for a group is counted as one application, the number of permits issued in 2004 was 160,279.

Zimbabwe

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were deported to Zimbabwe during 2004. [209613]

Mr. Browne: In 2004, one person has been removed as a result of deportation action to Zimbabwe.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Housing

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which other policies in addition to the £60,000 home scheme are planned to make housing more affordable for young adults. [213651]

Keith Hill: A number of homes created under the "Design for Manufacture" ("£60,000 home scheme") will be available under the First Time Buyers Initiative (FTBi). The FTBi will release land held in the public sector for the construction of new homes, removing the cost of land purchase and enabling us to offer homes to first time buyers at less than the market price. English Partnerships will lead on the delivery of 15,000 homes to 2010.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister offers a range of other low cost home ownership options, including shared ownership and Homebuy, which we are looking to simplify and make fairer. In addition, affordable housing for eligible key workers in London, the South East and Eastern regions is available through the Key Worker Living programme. This £690 million programme provides equity loans, shared ownership, intermediate rented and short term rented accommodation, and will help up to 16,000 people in the three years until March 2007.

"Sustainable Communities—Homes for All", published on 24 January sets out a wide range of measures to extend home ownership. This includes how the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will help 80,000 people into home ownership by 2010, including through the FTBi and our traditional programmes. It also announces a new Homebuy scheme that will allow tenants of local authorities and housing associations to buy a stake in their home, which can increase over time. Finally, it also proposes changes to the planning system to ensure more affordable housing for key workers and young families in rural areas.

This builds on the £38 billion Sustainable Communities Plan announced in February 2003 to provide for 200,000 extra homes in London and the wider South East.

Also, in the longer term, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is considering our response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply in England, which has reinforced the case for housing growth in areas of high demand. Wide-ranging research is currently being carried out into the implications of her recommendations and we plan to consult on proposals for a national market affordability goal in autumn 2005.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to increase the number of affordable homes for the people of Chorley. [214398]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on national policy for the provision of affordable housing in mixed communities. "Planning for Mixed Communities" was launched on 24 January and the consultation period ends on 15 April.

The Government office, with its regional partners, is considering the provision of affordable housing, as part of the reviews of the regional housing and regional spatial strategies for the north-west. The strategies are expected to be with Ministers in May and September respectively this year.

The Government office will continue to monitor the provision of affordable housing, in Chorley as in the remainder of the north-west.

Building Regulations

Mr. Horam: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what conclusions he has reached following the collation of issues raised by the consultation on amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations. [214153]

Phil Hope: Officials within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister completed the collation of over 400 separate responses to the Part L consultation in

December and are considering the issues raised in conjunction with the Building Regulations Advisory Committee. As yet no conclusions have been reached.

Mr. Horam: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received relating to the consultation on amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations on *(a)* the number of surveyors required to issue annual certificates and *(b)* the training required to implement these amendments. [214154]

Phil Hope: The consultation included proposals for implementing the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive as well as amending Part L. It is the Directive that calls for the engagement of surveyors to issue certificates but there is no requirement for these to be annual. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister received some representations in response to the consultation on the numbers of surveyors that may be needed and the means for training them and has just received a comprehensive report from industry and others addressing the issues.

Mr. Horam: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received urging for a delay in the implementation of revised building energy standards; what main reasons were given for the need for such a delay; and if he will make a statement. [214155]

Phil Hope: During the consultation on amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations and implementation of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive we received some representations for deferring revised building energy standards citing this would allow more time for training resulting in better levels of compliance. Mindful of the need to implement the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive by 4 January 2006 we are considering how best to handle this and are progressing a project to develop better guidance, dissemination and training to improve compliance.

Mr. Horam: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether in preparing the fuel cost data for amendments to Part L of the Building Regulations he took account of recent variations in domestic energy prices; and whether he plans to make regular future updates of such data. [214156]

Phil Hope: The fuel cost data used in the draft RIA published in July 2004 as part of the consultation on the proposed amendments of Part L of the Building Regulations were based on published data that did not take recent variations into account. The final RIA to be published when the amendments are laid will be based on 2005 data. The fuel cost data used is reviewed at intervals of between three and five years.

Business Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* rateable value thresholds, *(b)* rate relief levels and *(c)* multipliers operated (i) before and (ii) after the business rate revaluation. [213573]

Mr. Raynsford: The rate relief thresholds for 2004–05 and from 1 April 2005–06 are outlined as follows.

£

	2004–05	*2005–06*
Former agricultural premises	6,000	7,000
Unoccupied property	1,900	2,200
Rural		
Petrol filling stations and public houses	9,000	10,500
Other	6,000	7,000
LAs discretionary relief	12,000	14,000
Stud farms	3,000	3,500

Transitional arrangements

For the purposes of the transitional arrangements, a small property is defined as properties with a rateable value less than £12,000 outside London and £18,000 inside London. For 20005–06 this was increased to £15,000 outside London and £21,500 inside London. The thresholds were raised in line with the overall increase in rateable values resulting from the revaluation.

Non-domestic rate multipliers/poundage

2004–05 Multiplier:

Single multiplier of 0.456 or 45.6 pence in the pound

2005–06 Multipliers:

Small business rate relief multiplier of 0.415 or 41.5 pence in the pound

Non-domestic rating multiplier of 0.422 or 42.2 pence in the pound

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211651]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister includes the cost of early departures in its published Resource Accounts. Figures for years up to and including 2003–04 are therefore accessible from these accounts. Guidance on the accounting treatment of early departure costs can be found in sections 4.6 and 15.7 of the Treasury's (published) Resource Accounting Manual. Future years budgets are currently being considered in business planning.

Consents

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the discretionary activities of local authorities which require consent of central Government to proceed in 2004–05. [213578]

Mr. Raynsford: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Disabled Facilities Grants

Mr. Pike: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding has been available for disabled facilities grants in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [213301]

Yvette Cooper: The Government contributes towards 60 per cent. of local authority expenditure on disabled facilities grants (DFG) up to the limit of the allocation made to the authority at the beginning of the financial year, with the remaining 40 per cent. being met from elsewhere in local authorities' budgets.

Total DFG payments to local authorities in England by the Government over the last three years are tabled as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	88
2002–03	95
2003–04	112

Fire Brigade (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of the Lancashire fire brigade. [214804]

Mr. Raynsford: The Lancashire fire and rescue service operates under the direction of a fire and rescue authority made up of elected councillors from Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool. There are no plans to change these arrangements.

Fire Service

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions have taken place in each region between fire, ambulance and police services on how they will co-operate in the eventuality of regional control centres being set up for the fire service. [214010]

Mr. Raynsford: Cooperation between the emergency services, both at strategic level and at operational level, will be unaffected by the introduction of regional control centres. Existing channels for communications between emergency service control rooms will continue to be used. In addition, the three emergency services, defined as category 1 responders under the Civil Contingencies Act, have duties placed on them to co-operate with each other and other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency.

Housing

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many empty residential dwellings there have been in each Greater London borough in each year since 1997. [214558]

Keith Hill: The available information on empty residential dwellings in Greater London boroughs is tabled as follows. This data has been provided from a combination of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Investment Programme return and Housing Corporation's Regulatory and Statistical return.

Total vacant dwellings at 1 April in London boroughs: 1997 to 2004

Local authority	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Barking and Dagenham	1,509	1,727	2,005	2,172	1,329	1,117	775	656
Barnet	4,211	4,442	4,673	4,068	3,153	4,915	5,179	4,122
Bexley	2,410	2,467	2,203	1,185	1,982	1,644	2,064	1,787
Brent	4,792	3,754	5,151	6,174	5,504	5,670	5,115	5,104
Bromley	[1]—	[1]—	3,715	3,718	4,318	4,256	4,297	5,296
Camden	4,033	4,745	6,261	4,703	4,335	4,018	3,605	2,305
City of London	32	22	[1]—	[1]—	31	32	75	40
Croydon	5,594	5,505	4,598	4,130	4,401	4,650	4,526	4,942
Ealing	5,433	5,705	5,397	2,308	2,449	1,749	1,630	2,956
Enfield	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Greenwich	4,523	4,508	4,421	4,541	3,058	3,096	3,308	3,287
Hackney	5,165	4,486	3,284	3,970	3,254	[1]—	4,307	3,757
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,108	4,026	3,710	4,138	4,557	4,141	3,191	2,180
Haringey	5,419	4,413	5,604	4,417	4,815	3,538	[1]—	2,883
Harrow	983	1,081	1,325	1,231	1,218	1,180	1,196	1,631
Havering	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	2,702	505	2,777	2,697
Hillingdon	2,628	2,273	2,497	2,468	2,511	3,003	2,454	2,190
Hounslow	2,306	2,211	2,012	1,903	1,050	2,056	1,950	1,778
Islington	5,392	2,970	2,897	2,773	3,237	3,719	2,643	2,201
Kensington and Chelsea	8,387	[1]—	1,655	1,715	6,067	6,040	6,025	5,978
Kingston upon Thames	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	1,152	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Lambeth	5,213	4,656	4,646	4,639	2,572	4,262	3,851	3,769
Lewisham	5,246	[1]—	3,259	3,251	4,025	3,643	4,072	3,964
Merton	1,733	1,625	1,793	2,310	2,114	2,332	2,597	[1]—
Newham	3,424	5,183	5,717	4,663	5,102	3,140	3,276	2,779
Redbridge	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	2,335	[1]—	2,115
Richmond upon Thames	2,420	1,714	1,600	1,629	1,757	1,947	1,953	687
Southwark	3,665	4,658	6,649	6,917	6,367	3,840	4,112	4,480
Sutton	1,826	2,205	2,342	1,243	2,238	2,489	2,542	2,356
Tower Hamlets	4,894	5,071	5,507	5,306	5,429	4,620	4,519	6,430
Waltham Forest	4,840	4,939	2,601	3,004	2,739	3,969	1,470	3,397
Wandsworth	2,783	1,991	2,511	2,314	2,079	2,229	2,293	2,545
Westminster	3,128	3,295	3,407	3,063	2,957	3,176	4,378	4,018
London	121,298	111,952	112,665	105,016	105,181	101,017	100,648	99,892

[1] Denotes missing data. London total includes imputation for these missing values.

Sources:

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's annual Housing Investment Programme (HIP) returns and the Housing Corporation's annual Regulatory and Statistical return (RSR).

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much previously developed land has been *(a)* vacant and *(b)* derelict in each Greater London borough, in each year since 1997. [214560]

Keith Hill: The following table shows amounts of land from the national land use database of previously-developed land. The information was collected from local authorities in 1998 and annually from 2001. Some London boroughs did not provide information in one or more years.

Vacant and derelict land and buildings by London borough: 1998 to 2003

Hectares

	Vacant land and buildings				*Derelict land and buildings*			
London borough	*1998*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*1998*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Barking and Dagenham	7	46	45	n/a	19	89	86	n/a
Barnet	25	14	21	14	40	41	40	40
Bexley	13	2	11	15	10	10	10	13
Brent	35	n/a	20	14	11	n/a	10	9
Bromley	2	n/a	[1]—	n/a	[1]—	n/a	[1]—	n/a
Camden	9	9	8	n/a	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
City of London	1	1	n/a	[1]—	1	1	n/a	[1]—
City of Westminster	14	n/a	9	5	3	n/a	[1]—	[1]—
Croydon	n/a	28	28	38	n/a	16	13	14
Ealing	[1]—	n/a	[1]—	25	[1]—	n/a	[1]—	[1]—
Enfield	46	n/a	n/a	83	40	n/a	n/a	30
Greenwich	50	83	83	92	155	107	126	42
Hackney	2	1	1	1	[1]—	3	3	2
Hammersmith and Fulham	3	16	14	[1]—	32	n/a	[1]—	[1]—
Haringey	11	12	10	n/a	[1]—	n/a	[1]—	n/a
Harrow	18	31	14	14	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Havering	41	48	59	31	34	15	15	15
Hillingdon	9	52	36	30	[1]—	3	5	5
Hounslow	34	12	n/a	6	[1]—	5	n/a	1
Islington	10	9	n/a	21	[1]—	[1]—	n/a	[1]—
Kensington and Chelsea	1	n/a	[1]—	n/a	4	n/a	4	n/a
Kingston upon Thames	7	1	n/a	3	[1]—	n/a	n/a	[1]—
Lambeth	11	n/a	n/a	8	[1]—	n/a	n/a	[1]—
Lewisham	6	10	8	4	2	1	1	1
Merton	[1]—	n/a	4	4	[1]—	n/a	5	5
Newham	104	90	52	n/a	32	31	4	n/a
Redbridge	n/a	10	4	4	n/a	5	5	5
Richmond upon Thames	7	n/a	30	n/a	1	n/a	2	n/a
Southwark	n/a	22	5	n/a	n/a	1	4	n/a
Sutton	28	n/a	3	2	7	n/a	1	1
Tower Hamlets	n/a	20	9	n/a	n/a	7	4	n/a
Waltham Forest	27	25	16	13	2	2	1	[1]—
Wandsworth	7	8	5	3	2	31	26	21

n/a = Not available

[1] Nil or less than 0.5 hectares

Totals are as reported by the London borough

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the effect in Crosby of the changes to council tenants' rights since 1997. [214595]

Keith Hill: Council tenants enjoy a number of robust individual and collective rights which are protected through the legislative and regulatory framework. These statutory rights were introduced under the Housing Act 1980 and subsequent housing legislation. Although there has been no specific strengthening of these rights since 1997, the Human Rights Act and Freedom of Information Act do confer additional powers for all sections of society, including council tenants.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was received by Sefton in 2003–04 to help fund housing related services for vulnerable people through the "Supporting People" programme. [214596]

Yvette Cooper: In 2003–04 Sefton metropolitan borough council received £7,274,310 through the "Supporting People" programme of which, £6,995,282 was programme grant and £279,028 administration grant.

Housing Associations

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list *(a)* inspection regimes and *(b)* regulators to which housing associations are subject. [213574]

Keith Hill: The information is as follows:

(a) Registered social landlords (RSLs) are subject to financial, business and performance review by the Corporation and inspections are undertaken on behalf of the Corporation by the Audit Commission. The Audit Commission has the role of inspecting the quality of services provided by RSLs and the RSLs' arrangements for securing continuous improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and economy in their delivery of service.

(b) Registered social landlords comprise a wide range of bodies with varying forms of constitution. They are subject to regulation by the Housing Corporation and of any other regulatory body appropriate for their particular constitution and activities, for example the Charity Commission (charitable bodies), Companies House (not for profit companies), and the Financial Services Authority (for some Industrial and Provident Societies).

Local Government/Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what future roles are planned for *(a)* county councils, *(b)* district councils and *(c)* parish and town councils. [214393]

Mr. Raynsford: As set out in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Five Year Plan Sustainable Communities: People Places and Prosperity and building upon the reforms we have already put in place, our new strategy for local government—local:vision—which we are developing through a series of discussion documents, will help shape a new role for local government which puts it at the heart of our work to create sustainable communities and to empower people.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding Durham county council received in *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available. [214460]

Mr. Raynsford: In 2001–02 Durham county council received £344.303 million in revenue grants. The budget figure for 2004–05 is £418.681 million. These figures are as reported by the local authority and include special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding was received by Chester-le-Street district council in *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* the last year for which funding was available. [214461]

Mr. Raynsford: In 2001–02 Chester-le-Street district council received £4.027 million in revenue grants. The budget figure for 2004–05 is £4.786 million. These figures are as reported by the local authority and include special and specific grants inside Aggregate External Finance, revenue support grant and redistributed non-domestic rates.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities

Local Parking

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on local authorities' obligations to *(a)* assess the requirement for and *(b)* provide adequate local parking facilities for residents. [214032]

Keith Hill: Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: "Housing (PPG3)" explains that local authorities requirements for car parking, especially off-street car parking, are a significant determinant of the amount of land needed for new housing. In the 1990s, car parking standards for housing became increasingly demanding and were applied too rigidly, often as minimum standards.

With this in mind, PPG3 says that local authorities should have parking standards which allow for significantly lower levels of car parking provision where appropriate. For example, this could apply to developments:

> in locations like town centres where services are accessible by walking, cycling or public transport;
>
> which provide housing for older people, students and single people, all of whom are likely to have less demand for car parking than families; and
>
> involving the conversion of housing or non-residential buildings where off-street parking is less likely to be successfully designed into the scheme.

PPG3 advises that parking policies should be framed with good design in mind while recognising that car ownership varies with income, age, household type and location. The Planning for Housing statement of 17 July 2003, *Official Report*, column 53WS, explained that car parking standards should result in an average of 1.5 off-street car parking spaces per dwelling over an authority's area. As this is an average, this does not mean that the Government expects all dwellings in new developments to have 1.5 car parking spaces. Policies which would result in higher levels of off-street parking, especially in urban areas, should not be adopted.

To help the development of appropriate standards, the Government are carrying out research to consider how varying levels of car parking can be achieved in ways consistent with their policies on sustainable residential environments. We aim to publish this research in summer 2005.

Neighbourhood Renewal

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to give details of the future distribution of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund monies. [215004]

Yvette Cooper: No decisions have yet been made on the allocation of over £1 billion of new Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources for the period 2006–08. The Government are currently consulting with key stakeholders involved in delivering neighbourhood renewal at the local level. The Government will need to consider the responses to this consultation carefully before making a final decision on the allocation of the new resources. An announcement giving details of the future distribution of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund will be made later this year.

Northern Way Document

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* framework for consultation and *(b)* list of consultees were for the Northern Way document; and if he will make a statement. [214394]

Yvette Cooper: 'Moving Forward: The Northern Way' was published on 20 September 2004 by the independently chaired and regional development agency-led Northern Way Steering Group. The steering group contains representatives from business, the housing sector, higher education and the northern core cities as well as the three northern regional development agencies and regional assemblies, English Partnerships and Government.

Significant consultation went into the preparation of the report, including regional stakeholder events in June, November and December 2004, tailored presentations to organisations on request and extensive mailing to all local authorities and other organisations.

Details can be obtained from the three northern regional development agencies and the Northern Way website, www.thenorthernway.co.uk.

Planning (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the timetable is for consultation upon the South West regional assembly's housing proposals for Gloucestershire; and whether this will parallel the consultation for the Regional Spatial Strategy. [214647]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware that a consultation exercise is currently being carried out in Gloucestershire, seeking views on technical work that has been undertaken on behalf of the regional assembly by a steering group led by the county council. The consultation period runs from 17 January to 18 February 2005. The results of this and other work will feed into the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the South West, a draft of which will be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in December 2005. There will then be extensive consultation on the draft RSS, followed by an examination in public before an independent panel.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the relationship between the third review of the Gloucestershire structural plan, Stroud district council's local plan and the regional spatial strategy as they affect Gloucestershire. [214648]

Keith Hill: The Stroud local plan sets out detailed planning policies and proposals for Stroud district for the period to 2011 and is being prepared in accordance with the adopted Gloucestershire structure plan second review which sets out broad, strategic planning policies for the county. That structure plan has been the subject of review and the structure plan third alteration, covering the period 1996–2016, has reached an advanced stage. Regional planning guidance for the south-west (RPG10) was approved in 2001 and became the regional spatial strategy on commencement of the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. RPG10 covers the period 1996–2016 and is being reviewed as part of the preparation of a new regional spatial strategy (RSS) for the south west. The draft RSS will be submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in December 2005, following which there will be extensive public consultation and an examination in public before an independent panel. We currently estimate that the RSS will be approved in mid 2007.

Renewables Promotion

Ms Walley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made towards promoting renewables within the context of planning policy; and if he will make a statement. [214926]

Keith Hill: In 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published Planning Policy Statement 22 on Renewable Energy, that provides the policy context for encouraging appropriate development of further renewable energy schemes, and its companion guide which gives practical advice as to how these policies can be implemented. These documents provide a positive planning framework for achieving the Government target of generating 10 per cent. of UK electricity from renewable energy sources by 2010.

Right to Buy

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes have been sold under the right to buy scheme in Sheffield in each year since 1980. [214489]

Keith Hill: Annual figures of council right to buy sales for Sheffield reported by the local authority are as follows.

	Number
1981–82	513
1982–83	2,104
1983–84	1,005
1984–85	789
1985–86	1,001
1986–87	1,001
1987–88	1,860
1988–89	2,499
1989–90	3,806
1990–91	1,564
1991–92	831
1992–93	679
1993–94	548
1994–95	611
1995–96	453
1996–97	469
1997–98	450
1998–99	459
1999–2000	619
2000–01	745
2001–02	1,333
2002–03	1,489
2003–04	2,249

Source:
Quarterly returns on council house sales (P1B) from local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213788]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Sustainable Communities

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of the strategy for building sustainable communities. [213872]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister makes frequent assessments of progress on delivering sustainable communities through our Public Service Agreement Targets, information about which is published in our Departmental Annual Report. The Sustainable Communities Plan is a long-term programme of action, but progress to date has been excellent. Since 2002, the Government have increased house building by 10 per cent. delivered 43,589 affordable homes to rent and assisted over 11,000 key workers into home ownership. We have cut rough sleeping by 70 per cent. since 1998. Since 1997 we have made around 1 million social homes decent and increased grant to local authorities by 30 per cent. in real terms. We will build on this success through the measures outlined to the House by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister on 24 January.

Unallocated Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213264]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

TRANSPORT

Bolton Transport Infrastructure

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his Oral answers to the hon. Members for Leigh (Andy Burnham) and Wigan (Mr. Turner) of 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 699–700, for what schemes transport infrastructure funding will be available in the Bolton South East constituency. [214692]

Charlotte Atkins: The transport infrastructure funding is available for integrated transport capital schemes. Within Bolton, it will be for Greater Manchester PTE, in partnership with Bolton borough council, to determine for which schemes the funding will be used. Previous similar funding has been used, for example, to support bus-related highway improvements.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214719]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Burnley constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Lancashire county council since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for Lancashire to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

Lancashire county council

£ million

Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital Maintenance	3.984	3.048	6.096	16.630	17.782	13.337	16.176
Integrated Block	2.203	3.833	4.200	11.200	11.922	12.051	13.033
Major schemes	0.968	2.800	0.636	—	1.026	—	—
Targeted bus grants[1]	1.233	1.139	1.411	2.212	1.575	3.777	1.238
Total	8.338	10.82	12.343	30.042	32.305	29.165	30.447

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding

In addition, since 1997 the Burnley constituency has benefited from major improvements to strategic infrastructure, for example the South Ribble M65 Interface scheme has been completed.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [214977]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Pendle constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Lancashire county council since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for Lancashire to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

Lancashire county council

£ million

Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital Maintenance	3.984	3.048	6.096	16.630	17.782	13.337	16.176
Integrated Block	2.203	3.833	4.200	11.200	11.922	12.051	13.033
Major schemes	0.968	2.800	0.636	—	1.026	—	—
Targeted bus grants[1]	1.233	1.139	1.411	2.212	1.575	3.777	1.238
Total	8.338	10.82	12.343	30.042	32.305	29.165	30.447

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding.

In addition, since 1997 the Pendle constituency has benefited from major improvements to strategic infrastructure, for example the South Ribble M65 Interface scheme has been completed.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Hemsworth constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Hemsworth constituency. [214496]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the Hemsworth constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–97 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to City of Wakefield council since 1997 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for City of Wakefield to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with the local transport plan for West Yorkshire and the local priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 1997–98 not included since they cover a period proceeding May 1997 and announcements concerning the 1997–98 allocations were made in 1996.

City of Wakefield

£ million

Nature of funding	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital Maintenance	1.404	1.752	4.608	2.860	3.762	4.190	4.292
Integrated Block	1.086	1.130		2.900	3.095	2.910	2.931
Major schemes	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Targeted bus grants[1]	0.920	0.764	1.473	2.385	2.050	2.773	0.980
Total	3.41	3.646	6.081	8.145	8.907	9.873	8.203

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding.

The Hemsworth constituency is likely to benefit from further improvements to strategic infrastructure. Funding support for the Hemsworth to A1 and the Glasshoughton Coalfields link roads has been provisionally approved.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out, including statistical information relating as directly as possible to the constituency, the effect on North Durham constituency of his Department's policies since June 2001. [214471]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department has put in place a considerable programme of improvements across a wide range of transport policy areas since 1997. I am confident that the North Durham constituency will have benefited from these. For example, the injury totals for all road causalities in Great Britain fell from 327,803 in 1997 to 290,607 in 2003, and the numbers of children aged under 16 years killed or seriously injured on our roads fell from 6,452 in 1997 to 4,100 in 2003. On our railways, passenger kilometres have increased from 32.1 billion in 1996–7 to 40.9 billion in 2003–04, a rise of 27 per cent. In terms of improvements to air quality, emissions of the UK's two main pollutants—nitrous oxides and particles—fell by 31 per cent. and 27 per cent. respectively between 1997 and 2002.

The funding provided directly to Durham county council since 2001 is shown in the following table[1]. It has been for Durham to determine how that allocation has been spent, in line with its local transport plan and its priorities.

[1] Funding allocations for 2000–01 not included since they cover a period proceeding June 1997.

Durham county council

£ million

Nature of funding	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Capital Maintenance	8.555	9.103	8.008	9.357
Integrated Block	5.397	6.440	8.054	7.895
Major schemes	1.955	6.117	1.007	8.103
Targeted bus grants[1]	1.713	1.626	0.902	0.929
Total	17.62	23.286	17.971	26.284

[1] Includes Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus challenge funding.

Finally, the Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 Census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/. In addition, the Department for Transport's website also contains data on transport trends over the past 20 years at http://www.dft.gov.uk.

Disabled Access to Transport

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been made available to improve disabled access transport services in Coventry, South. [214079]

Charlotte Atkins: Coventry city council and Centro receive funding for transport schemes through the joint West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP). The most up to date information we have is taken from the LTP Annual Progress Report for 2003–04. Excluding maintenance, the allocation to the West Midlands LTP for that year was £51 million of which Coventry's share was £5.251 million.

The Annual Progress Report does not specify spending in particular areas but it shows that £70,000 was spent specifically on miscellaneous facilities for the disabled across the city. Most of this would have involved the provision of facilities such as dropped kerbing. However, many other highway improvement and bus corridor schemes would routinely include provision for the disabled. For instance improvements to traffic signals, where these include works to pedestrian facilities, would also involve measures such as tactile paving and audible warnings.

Last year we gave approval to a £28.8 million funding contribution to the Coventry Primelines major scheme, which aims to improve bus services throughout the city. Three corridors in your constituency will be upgraded as part of the scheme. Works will include the provision of level boarding and improved shelters at 170 stops at a total cost of about £800,000 over the next three years.

In addition, the West Midlands Special Needs Transport charity provides a Ring and Ride service throughout the metropolitan area. Centro provide an annual grant in the region of £8.5 million to the charity.

Driving Offences

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) which Minister in his Department approved for publication the document Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving; [215182]

(2) on what date and at what time copies of the published version of the Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving were received in his Department; [215183]

(3) on what date *(a)* he and *(b)* each Minister in his Department first saw a copy of the published version of the document, Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving. [215184]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State agreed to its publication through the relevant Cabinet Committee in the usual manner. Ministers were therefore fully aware of its contents prior to publication.

Thereafter, the document was published by the Home Office at 9.30 am on Thursday 3 February. Copies were collected from the Home Office by Department for Transport officials at 9.15 am on Thursday 3 February 2005 and taken direct to the House of Commons where my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and I received them at the same time as members of the Standing Committee. The final document was provided to the offices of the Secretary of State and Minister of State subsequently.

Noise Pollution (Maidenhead)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what studies his Department has conducted of the effect at different times of day of noise pollution from Heathrow airport in Maidenhead and the surrounding area. [213495]

Charlotte Atkins: Noise is continually monitored by BAA at 12 sites around the airport, including Dorney, to the south east of Maidenhead. Annual noise contours at Heathrow, which provide noise maps for a 16 hour day time period, are calibrated from mobile noise monitors and produced by the Civil Aviation Authority's Environmental Research Consultancy Department on behalf of the Department. These are published annually on the Department's website. They show that Maidenhead lies beyond the 57dBA contour area normally considered to represent the onset of significant community annoyance.

The Department and its predecessors have commissioned a range of studies over the years about the effects of noise on annoyance and sleep disturbance at various times of day and night. These include the large-scale "Aircraft Noise Index Study" (CAA DR Report 8402) in the early 1980s, which included fieldwork at Slough.

On behalf of the Department, a consortium led by The MVA Consultancy is currently engaged in a major study of "Attitudes to Noise from Aircraft Sources in England" (ANASE). As part of the extended pilot phase of this project, questionnaires about attitudes to noise at different times of day were trialled at a number of sites to the west of Heathrow, though not in Maidenhead itself. If this project proceeds to its second (major fieldwork and analysis) phase, sites will be sampled from a wide range of possible areas around Heathrow and other airports.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211670]

Charlotte Atkins: Following departmental reorganisations, my Department no longer has responsibility for campaigns such as fire safety and the environment run by predecessor Departments. Therefore total advertising and publicity figures for 1996–98 could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

On road safety advertising however, we have increased our commitment substantially from £4.76 million and £4.48 million in 1996–97 and 1997–98 respectively to £10.1 million in 2003–04 in support of the THINK! road safety campaign.

Expenditure by the Department for fiscal year 2003–04 and estimates for the current and future years' expenditure on advertising and advertising and publicity are set out in the following table, where currently available.

£ million

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
(a) Advertising expenditure:					
DfT Central	10.4	9.8	10	10	n/a
DfT Agencies	10.43	8.3	n/a	n/a	n/a
(b) Advertising and publicity:					
DfT Central	16.4	16.1	16	16	n/a
DfT Agencies	17.0	15.6	15.5	12.3	n/a

n/a = Not available.

The majority of Executive Agency advertising spend above is attributable to DVLA. The Agencies' publicity spend figure however includes a component of advertising, given some agencies, who do not advertise much, charge advertising and publicity to the same accounting code.

Rural Transport

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Answer of 3 February 2005, *Official Report,* column 1038W, on rural transport, if he will set out with statistical information that relates as closely as possible to *(a)* Warrington South constituency, *(b)* Warrington and *(c)* Cheshire, what initiatives his Department has introduced since 2001 to support transport provision in rural areas. [215138]

Charlotte Atkins: In the period since 2001 we have made available awards to both Warrington borough council and Cheshire county council under the Rural Bus Subsidy Grant (RBSG) and the Rural Bus Challenge (RBC) schemes. The totals for the period 2000–01 to 2004–05 are shown in the following table.

£

Authority	*RBSG*	*RBC*
Warrington borough council	419,859	0
Cheshire county council	4,153,367	2,118,000

The initiatives which I mentioned in my previous answer on support for community transport, steps to make it easier to provide demand responsive bus services and the introduction of accessibility planning of course apply in these areas as elsewhere.

Solent Secondary Surveillance Radar

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what measures his Department has taken to ensure that the Solent Secondary Surveillance Radar is repaired; when he expects it to be functioning again; and if he will make a statement. [214482]

Charlotte Atkins: This is a matter for the equipment owners, National Air Traffic Services Limited and the Civil Aviation Authority, the independent aviation regulator.

TOC Subsidies

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what gross subsidies were paid to each train operating company in each year since 1995–96. [215181]

Mr. McNulty: Franchise payments to and from each train operating company for each year since 1995–96 are included in the Strategic Rail Authority's 2003–04 Annual Report, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Bangladesh

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the persecution of religious minorities, specifically Christians, in Bangladesh; [212268]

(2) he will make representations to the Government of Bangladesh about recent allegations of abuse against Hindus. [212269]

Mr. Alexander: We continue to be concerned about the situation of religious minorities, including Hindus and Christians, in Bangladesh. I raised these concerns with the Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, on 21 December during a visit to Dhaka. We regularly raise issues of religious persecution and intolerance with the Bangladeshi authorities, both bilaterally and with EU colleagues. We urge them to ensure minorities are suitably protected, that all incidents are promptly and fully investigated, that the perpetrators of crimes against religious minorities are brought to justice and that firm action is taken against incitement. We shall continue to do so.

Burma

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the EU are taking to tackle human rights abuses by the military junta in Burma. [213228]

Mr. Alexander: The UK works closely with its EU partners to promote human rights in Burma.

Human rights violations have been highlighted in successive EU co-sponsored resolutions on Burma in the United Nations General Assembly and in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

The UK played a key role in drafting last year's UN General Assembly Human Rights Resolution on Burma. The Resolution, adopted by the UN in December, condemned the many human rights abuses in the country, including against ethnic groups.

I met the Burmese Ambassador on 29 November 2004 and pressed for political reform in Burma, full respect for human rights and the need for all groups in Burma, including ethnic nationalities, to play a full part in national reconciliation.

We will continue to raise our concerns.

China

Mr. Sarwar: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the policy of the Chinese Government of returning North Korean refugees. [213712]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs gave to the hon. Member for Gloucester (Mr. Dhanda) on 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1310W.

Cyprus

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the United States Administration on its policy on the requirement of the European Union that there will need to be official recognition of the Republic of Cyprus by Turkey; and if he will make a statement. [213742]

Mr. MacShane: Since the EU's decision to open EU accession negotiations with Turkey on December 17, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not personally discussed relations between Turkey and the Republic of Cyprus with the United States Administration. However, our officials maintain regular contact with the United States on all matters relating to the East Mediterranean.

Recognition of the Republic of Cyprus is not a requirement for opening or conducting accession negotiations with Turkey. But the Foreign Secretary and I have made it clear that a situation in which there are two member states of the EU who do not recognise each other is unthinkable.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997; [213657]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213677]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office carried out staff surveys in 1997 and 1999, covering all UK based staff, and in 2004 covering all UK based staff and those employed locally by our Embassies and High Commissions overseas. The total expenditure on these three surveys was £85,394. Of this, consultants' costs were £30,000 for the 1999 staff survey, £25,917 for the 2001 staff survey, and £19,463 for the 2004 staff survey. The remaining costs of £10,014 relate to printing and associated costs.

European Constitution

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 427W, on the European Constitution, what the names and proposed budgets are for *(a)* the PR agency, *(b)* partnership marketing and *(c)* e-communications organisations engaged by his Department to promote the European Constitution. [214288]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows:

(a) The name of the PR agency appointed is Geronimo PR. The proposed budget for this contract is £40,000.

(b) A partnership marketing agency has not yet been appointed. The proposed budget for partnership marketing is £20,000.

(c) An agency for e-communications has not yet been appointed. The proposed budget for e-communications is £80,000. All of this activity is part of normal work to provide information to the UK public about the EU.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the Government's implementation of Article IV-444 of the EU Constitution; [214348]

(2) if he will explain the Government's intended procedures for parliamentary ratification of decisions taken by the European Council on the basis of paragraphs 1 or 2 of Article IV-444 of the EU Constitution. [214349]

Mr. MacShane: Clause 2 of the European Union Bill creates a requirement that any initiative for a decision to amend the Treaty made under Article IV-444 must be approved by Parliament in order for it to be recognised in domestic law. The House of Lords will be granted a minimum of 20 sitting days to consider any proposed change and deliver an opinion to the House of Commons. Parliamentary approval will then be signified by approval of a resolution by the House of Commons.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he sought legal advice regarding the impact of the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on industrial relations law in the UK. [214350]

Mr. MacShane: Legal advice is routinely sought on EU matters that could potentially have an impact on the UK.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his assessment is of the impact of the Charter of Fundamental Rights within the EU Constitution on industrial relations law in the UK. [214351]

Mr. MacShane: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement that my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary made on the European Union Charter of Fundamental Rights on 9 September 2004, *Official Report*, columns 133–136WS, which made it clear that the Charter will have no practical impact upon UK industrial relations law or the rights of UK workers.

The provisions of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms are addressed to the institutions, bodies, offices and agencies of the European Union with due regard to the principle of subsidiarity, and to the member states only when they are implementing Union Law. The Charter does not extend the scope of application of Union Law beyond the existing powers of the Union or establish any new power or task for the Union. Nor does it modify powers and tasks defined in the other parts of the Constitutional Treaty, which specifically excludes EU action on legislative areas such as pay, the right of association, the right to strike and the right to impose lock-outs.

General Affairs and External Relations Council

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the outcome was of the General Affairs and External Relations Council held on 31 January and 1 February; what the Government's stance was on the issues discussed, including its voting record; and if he will make a statement. [213728]

Mr. MacShane: The information is as follows:

Outcome of 31 January/1 February 2005 General Affairs and External Relations Council

I represented the UK at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in Brussels on 31 January/1 February in the absence of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. John Grant (UK Permanent Representative to the EU) accompanied me.

Conclusions were agreed on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), Iraq, Ukraine, tsunami, Cuba, Western Balkans, and Sudan.

General affairs session

Annual programme of the Council (2005)/annual work programme of the European Commission

The Council held a short public discussion on the Annual Operational Programme (AOP) of the Council for 2005. The debate concentrated on the identified priorities: negotiations on the financial framework for the budget of the EU during the period 2007–13; the Lisbon strategy; freedom, justice and security; and the launching of the preliminary works for the application, after its ratification, of the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe. The AOP was previously discussed and agreed at the December GAERC. Copies are available in the Library of the House. The Council also took note of the programme of work of the new European Commission which was presented by Jose Barroso, President of the European Commission. The Council was pleased with the Commissions priorities which were developed through close co-operation between the presidency, the Commission and the European Parliament.

Future financing 2007–13

Based on a questionnaire submitted by the Luxembourg presidency to member states, Ministers discussed cohesion policy for 2007–13. As in previous debates on future financing the Government argued that the Commission's proposals for real terms spending increases of 35 per cent. from 2007 to 2013 are unrealistic and unacceptable. We, along with France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden, believe that the priorities of an enlarged Union can be met within a budget of 1 per cent. EU gross national income. This is sufficient to meet the challenge of cohesion provided that resources are focused on priorities—namely the poorest member states. The next meeting of the GAERC on 21 February will discuss competitiveness for growth and employment.

External relations session

MEPP

The Council welcomed the holding of the Palestinian presidential elections and expressed its appreciation to Israel for the measures taken to facilitate the electoral process. The Council presented its congratulations to President Abbas and expressed its desire to work with him and his Prime Minister to implement the road map. In this context, the Council will develop the short-term action plan adopted by the European Council in November 2004. The UK briefed the Council on the London Meeting, which will take place on 1 March. The London Meeting is designed to offer the international community an opportunity to support the efforts of the Palestinian President.

Iraq

The Council discussed Sunday's election in Iraq and paid tribute to the courage and resolve of the Iraqis who voted despite the difficult security circumstances. The electoral turnout demonstrated the overwhelming importance that the Iraqi people attach to democracy and the rule of law. The Government share this view. This election was an important step on the road to democracy, freedom and peace for the Iraqi people. Recognition was paid to the enormous efforts made by the Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq, as well as local observers, the Iraqi Interim Government, and the UN. The Council reaffirmed its will to continue, together with the rest of the international community, to support the Iraqi transition process leading to a constitutionally elected government. The European Commission reported that it was ready to send experts to help with the constitution if requested to do so by the Iraqis.

Cuba

The Council had an exchange of views on its policy towards Cuba. Ministers reasserted the importance of encouraging a process of transition towards democratic pluralism and respect for human rights as well as fundamental freedoms in Cuba. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to constructive dialogue with the Cuban authorities so as to achieve tangible results in political and economic areas and the sphere of human rights. Furthermore, the Council decided to develop more intense relations with the peaceful political opposition and with broader layers of Cuban civil society through enhanced and more regular dialogue. The Government were pleased to have an agreed EU policy which will, on the one hand, help us to strengthen our dialogue with the peaceful opposition and, on the other, normalise relations with the Cuban Government.

Ukraine

The Council held a discussion of the political situation in Ukraine and the EU's relations with Ukraine. The Council was pleased with the conduct of the re-run of the second round of the presidential election and welcomed the election of the new President. The Council also welcomed the extensive and ambitious political and economic programme that President Yushchenko plans to carry out in Ukraine during his term. The Council looks forward to being able to launch at the 21 February EU-Ukraine Cooperation Council, the action plan negotiated in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The action plan will pave the way for enhanced cooperation between the EU and the Ukraine. In this context, the Council welcomed the letter from High Representative Solana and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, consisting of 10 concrete steps to strengthen cooperation between the EU and Ukraine. The Council will examine these proposed steps and return to the issue at its next meeting on 21 February.

Tsunami

The Council introduced an action plan to coordinate the initiatives that the European Union and its member states are to take following the tsunami to deal effectively with the consequences of such events today and in the future. The action plan outlines possible actions to address this type of disaster or similar disasters from the standpoint of a better use of existing instruments, possibilities for developing a rapid response capacity for the Union (planning, coordinating and resource mobilisation structure), and stronger consular cooperation in favour of the citizens of Europe. The presidency tasked the relevant committees with taking the work forward. The Government welcomed the presidency's action plan and looks forward to discussing ideas further with partners and the Commission.

Western Balkans

Enlargement Commissioner Rehn briefed Ministers on the current state of Croatia's compliance with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). He reported that Croatia is not cooperating fully with ICTY. High Representative Solana expressed concern at the current situation in Serbia and Montenegro. Ministers adopted Conclusions stressing the need for greater ICTY cooperation across the region and support for the actions of Lord Ashdown in December to encourage Republika Srpska to cooperate with ICTY. The Government support this assessment.

Sudan

High Representative Solana welcomed the successful conclusion of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), and the improving EU relationship with the African Union (AU). However, the Council expressed concern over the recent bombardment of several villages in Darfur by the Sudanese Air Force. The Council condemned these attacks. The Council reiterated its call to respect the ceasefire of N'Djamena and the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council. The Government welcome the signature of CPA. It is vital that the international community now supports the parties in implementing the terms of the agreement. The international community also needs to remain focused on Darfur, where both sides continue to violate the ceasefire. The Government believe that the EU should start actively to consider a range of possible targeted sanctions, which are balanced and effective.

AOB—EU/Africa dialogue

Portugal informed the Council of its continued contacts with African countries over the strengthening of the EU-Africa dialogue and in particular the organisation of a second Europe-Africa Summit. The presidency highlighted that the lack of progress in Zimbabwe meant that the EU was not yet in a position to consider a summit. The Government agreed with this assessment.

AOB—effective multilateralism

Sweden called for the Council to consider how it could support the UN High Level Panel (HLP), and how it could be more effective in contributing to the international Rule of Law. The presidency noted that the relevant committees were looking at the HLP recommendations.

AOB—Latvia/Russia

Latvia stressed the importance of a resolution to the current border disputes between Latvia and Russia before the celebrations of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War and the EU-Russia Summit to be held in Moscow in May 2005.

Iraq

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many citizens have been killed as a result of military action by coalition forces in Iraq since April 2002. [204229]

Mr. MacShane: I refer the hon. Member to the answer provided by my right hon. Friend the Minister for Armed Forces (Mr. Ingram) to my hon. Friend the Member for Liverpool Walton (Mr. Kilfoyle) on 27 January 2005 *Official Report*, column 541W and to the reply my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. Rammell) gave to the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Llew Smith) on 10 January *Official Report*, column 23 W. Additionally, the Iraqi Ministry of Health released a statement on 28 January 2005, which stated that their latest records from July to December 2004, taken from some 180 hospitals, show that 2,041 Iraqis were killed as a result of 'military action'. The statement explained that:

> "Casualties of car bombs and other clearly identifiable terrorist attacks are recorded as being caused by terrorist incidents. All other casualties are recorded as military action. The casualties may include insurgents, civilians as well as Iraqi police who are treated in Ministry of Health hospitals. The casualties may have been killed or injured by terrorist or coalition forces. Coalition forces include Iraqi police, Iraqi security forces, and the Multi-National forces."

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* officials in his Department and *(c)* representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of (i) the US Administration, (ii) the Governments of the EU member states and (iii) the Iraqi interim authority concerning Turkey's concerns over the (1) run-up to and (2) outcome of the elections in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213244]

Mr. MacShane: We discuss Iraq regularly with our international partners, including the impact of developments in Iraq on Iraq's neighbours. We enjoy a very good dialogue with the Turkish Government on Iraq and are well aware of Turkey's views and concerns. Turkey's Foreign Minister on 31 January welcomed the Iraqi elections as a step taken on the road to the establishment of a democratic regime in Iraq.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made concerning the ill treatment of prisoners by the Iraq forces in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [213570]

Mr. MacShane: The Government are engaged in a continuous dialogue with the Iraqi Government about the need to respect human rights. We are offering support to the Human Rights Ministry in Baghdad and through a team of prison officers and police experts in Basra to advise and mentor their Iraqi colleagues in better prison management in the South of Iraq.

We welcome the recent Human Rights Watch (HRW) report on Iraq and its recommendations on areas where more work needs to be done by the Iraqi authorities, by the international community and by Non-Governmental Organisations to prevent ill-treatment of prisoners in Iraqi detention facilities. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Human Rights in Iraq, my hon. Friend the Member for Cynon Valley (Ann Clwyd) raised our concerns, and the issues contained in the HRW report, with the head of the Southern Iraq Office of the Ministry of Human Rights while she was in Basra on 1 February. She also raised this with the Iraqi Minister of Human Rights, Bakhtiar Amin.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what categorisation system the Iraqi Ministry of Health uses to calculate casualty figures in Iraq. [214076]

Mr. MacShane: The Iraqi Ministry of Health released a statement on 28 January 2005, which explained that: "Casualties of car bombs and other clearly identifiable terrorist attacks are recorded as being caused by terrorist incidents. All other casualties are recorded as military action. The casualties may include insurgents, civilians as well as Iraqi police who are treated in Ministry of Health hospitals. The casualties may have been killed or injured by terrorist or coalition forces. Coalition forces include Iraqi police, Iraqi security forces, and the Multi-National forces."

Nepal

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to encourage the restoration of multi-party democracy in Nepal. [214655]

Mr. Alexander: On 1 February, I summoned the Nepalese Ambassador to convey my grave concern over developments and to press for the early restoration of multi-party democracy. Later the same day, I issued a public statement calling for the immediate restoration of multi-party democracy and setting out my great concern at the steps taken by the King. Our Ambassador in Nepal is due to make similar representations to the King. The EU also made a statement along similar lines with input from the UK. The UK is currently considering, in consultation with our international partners, what further action we might take.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* weaponry, *(b)* military training and *(c)* other military equipment the UK Government have provided to the army of Nepal in the last five years. [214656]

Mr. Alexander: The UK has not supplied any lethal weaponry to the Royal Nepalese Army (RNA) in the last five years. The UK has, however, gifted the following non-lethal military equipment.

2 × 2 Tonne ultra light dumper trucks	2000
35 × Land rovers	2002
2 × Mi17 helicopters	2003
Load carrying equipment for MISG	2003
10 × Mk7 bomb disposal wheelbarrows	2003
Infrastructure support to RNA Intelligence School	2003–04
Office equipment for RNA Intelligence School	2003–04
Infrastructure support to RNA Peacekeeping School	2003–04
IED search equipment	2003–04
Radios and night vision goggles for MISG	2003–04

2 × Islander STOL aircraft and associated intelligence equipment	2004
Revolution IED wheelbarrow	2004
Engine spare parts for Ferret Scout Cars	2004
English language training facility for RNA Peacekeeping School	2004–05

The UK has also provided three categories of military training as follows:

Routine Training. The UK has traditionally sent two RNA cadets to the Royal Military Academy each year. On passing out, these cadets then attend the Platoon Commanders' Battle Course run by the School of Infantry. In addition, an RNA major attends the Joint Services' Staff College each year at Shrivenham. Young officers have attended the Jungle Warfare Course in Brunei in the past—these courses are now conducted in Belize (a team of 6 RNA officers attended this course in 2004). The RNA also has one vacancy every three years at the Royal College of Defence Studies. This course is usually attended by a brigadier general.

Specialist Training on UK Courses. Since the deployment of the RNA against the Maoist insurgency, RNA officers have attended specialist courses in the UK. These include the Royal Engineer Troop Commanders' Course, Counter-Terrorist Search courses, Ammunition Technical Officers' courses (bomb disposal), Counter-Terrorist Bomb Disposal courses and the International Intelligence Directors' courses.

Tailored Training for the RNA. Training courses have been specifically run for RNA students in both the UK and Nepal since their deployment on operations against the Maoists. These have included training of Military intelligence Support Group personnel and basic counter-insurgency training.

All military training given to RNA students includes instruction on the Rules of War, including training on human rights and the Geneva Convention.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions have taken place with *(a)* EU partners and *(b)* India regarding (i) Maoist insurgency in Nepal, (ii) the recent breakdown in multi-party democracy and (iii) the possibility of UN mediation between the Nepalese King, politicians and Maoists. [214657]

Mr. Alexander: We have a regular dialogue with India and with EU partners regarding the situation in Nepal. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary have raised the issue with their Indian counterparts in the new administration and the UK Special Representative for Nepal, Sir Jeffrey James, visits India several times a year. The Foreign Secretary raised Nepal with EU partners at the General Affairs and External Relations Council in June 2004 and it is regularly discussed in committee at official level. After the King assumed direct control of the country on 1 February the EU issued a statement with input from the UK. We have been in regular contact with the Indians following last week's actions by the King. We will continue to work to encourage all democratic forces in Nepal to work together.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to advise *(a)* UK citizens in Nepal and *(b)* their families in the UK of the changing political and security situation in that country; and what assistance is being provided. [214658]

Mr. Alexander: The British Embassy in Kathmandu is providing a normal consular service to the British Community, visitors and tourists in Nepal. However, telephone communications in the country remain limited. The Embassy also operates a warden system, to maintain contact with members of the British Community. Embassy staff are answering by email enquiries from British nationals. We continue to keep the travel advice under regular review.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the strength and the military capabilities of Maoist insurgents in Nepal and *(b)* the threat they pose to the Nepalese monarchy; and what steps the Government have taken to assist Nepal in tackling the insurgents. [214659]

Mr. Alexander: The Nepalese Maoists' influence now extends to much of Nepal. In the past year they have demonstrated that they are able to organise and carry out occasional large scale military attacks (it is estimated with 5,000 or more men). They have carried out bombing campaigns in Kathmandu and have assassinated senior security force and political figures

We have consistently held that the topography and capabilities of the Maoists and the security forces are such that military victory by either side, if achievable, would not bring about an acceptable lasting democratic solution to the problems Nepal faces.

The UK has been providing a wide ranging and integrated package of assistance to Nepal, partly through the Department for International Development programme and using funds from the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP). This assistance has ranged from development assistance aimed at tackling the underlying causes of poverty, social injustice and conflict in the country to the provision of non-lethal military assistance to the Royal Nepalese Army (UNA). The military assistance was particularly aimed at boosting the RNA's intelligence gathering capability and selective training, including on human rights. Money from the GCPP has also been used to fund the Peace Secretariat, a body of civil servants connected to the Prime Minister's Office and tasked with identifying political solutions to the conflict.

Nuclear Weapons

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent meetings John Freeman, UK Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, has had with non-governmental organisations in respect of the forthcoming review conference of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty; what matters were raised by each organisation; and what steps the Government plans as a result of the meetings. [214328]

Mr. MacShane: John Freeman met representatives of the Mayors for Peace organisation on 21 January 2005 to discuss Government policy and issues relevant to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty review conference. On 24 January 2005, he chaired a roundtable meeting attended by representatives of 12 non-governmental organisations for further discussions on these issues. Those represented at the roundtable meeting were: Abolition 2000, Acronym Institute/Disarmament Diplomacy, British American Security Information Council, Christian CND, CND, Oxford Research Group, Peace and Security Liaison Group, Pugwash, Quaker Peace and Social Witness, VERTIC, Weapons of Mass Destruction Awareness Programme, and World Court Project. A presentation was also given at this meeting on behalf of the Nuclear Issues Working Group and Peace and Security Liaison Group, umbrella groups for a number of non-governmental organisations.

There is an understanding that comments made during these meetings between officials and non-governmental organisations are not attributed but, in each case, those attending took the opportunity to discuss a range of issues about the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime and possible outcomes at the review conference. The points made in the meetings will be considered as part of the dialogue with non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Further meetings will be held during the conference between officials and the representatives of NGOs attending.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Pakistan about Mrs. Hanifan Bibi. [211866]

Mr. Alexander: We are aware of the attack on Mrs. Hanifan Bibi in January this year. Although we have made no representations to the Pakistani authorities regarding this particular incident, the British Government continues to take a serious view of all aspects of religious intolerance and discrimination in Pakistan. We continue to raise our concerns with the Pakistani authorities on issues such as this and other Human Rights concerns in concert with our EU partners, most recently in December 2004.

Rio Tinto/Mittal Steel

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the actions and interests of Rio Tinto or Mittal Steel have been brought to his or his Department's attention since January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [210719]

Mr. Alexander: Rio Tinto has been involved in a number of Corporate Social Responsibility activities, including the UK-US led Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights. The company is also actively involved in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and the UN Global Compact, in whose UK Forum the company participates.

In addition, Rio Tinto is, like other UK companies, in periodic contact with officials at our overseas missions concerning existing and possible future investment projects, in, for example, Latin America and Africa. The details of these contacts are subject to commercial confidence.

During Romania's EU accession negotiations, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was kept informed of discussions about Romania's steel industry, which included Mittal Steel.

Saddam Hussein

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether officials of the UK Government have visited Saddam Hussein since he has been in custody; what reports he has received on *(a)* Saddam Hussein's health and *(b)* the prison conditions in which Saddam Hussein is being held; and if he will make a statement. [213913]

Mr. MacShane: Saddam Hussein was transferred into the Iraqi criminal justice system on 1 July 2004, and is currently awaiting trial. At the request of Prime Minster Allawi, the US will maintain physical custody of Saddam Hussein until such time as the Iraqi Correctional Service is able to provide for his safe and secure detention.

UK Government officials have not visited Saddam Hussein but the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has regular access to him. The ICRC would raise any concerns it has about Saddam Hussein's health and conditions of detention in confidential reports to the US and Iraqi authorities.

Singapore

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Singapore Authorities to encourage them not to agree to restrictions on their right to sign international environmental agreements as a condition of a bilateral US trade agreement. [213252]

Mr. Alexander: None.

Tim Spicer

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the occasions on which his Department's staff have met Tim Spicer in the past 24 months in their official capacity, broken down by date; and if he will make a statement. [205526]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 16 December 2004]:* Our records indicate that in 2003 officials met Tim Spicer once overseas, and that during 2004 there were two meetings in the UK and six overseas. We are not aware of any meetings during 2005.

Turkey

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the number of *(a)* allegations of police mistreatment, *(b)* charges brought against police officers and *(c)* dismissals of police officers following allegations of mistreatment in each year since 1997 in Turkey; and if he will make a statement. [212274]

Mr. MacShane: Our Embassy in Ankara monitors the human rights situation in Turkey closely, including implementation of the Turkish Government's reforms introduced to eradicate torture.

According to NGO statistics, the number of allegations of police mistreatment for 2003 increased compared to previous years. However, NGOs attributed this to a greater inclination to report incidents of torture rather than an actual increase in the number of incidents. In the first six months of 2004 the Turkish NGO, the Human Rights Association, recorded 202 allegations of torture arid ill treatment under police custody compared with 818 in the whole of 2003. The European Commission's 2004 Progress Report on Turkey states that:

> "the Government's serious efforts to implement the legislative reforms have lead to a decline in instances of torture".

We believe that the number of police officers charged with mistreatment, and the number who have been dismissed following allegations of mistreatment has risen, but the numbers of cases opened and the number of successful prosecutions remains very low.

There is growing evidence of improved implementation of the Turkish Government's reforms introduced to eradicate torture. However, allegations of torture continue, and it is clear that more needs to be done.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the death toll in Turkey in each year since 1984 due directly to *(a)* Kurdish action, *(b)* Government action aimed at Kurdish groups and *(c)* other violent causes; and if he will make a statement. [213070]

Mr. MacShane: Figures released by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicate that more than 30,000 people have died as a result of terrorist activities perpetrated by the Kurdish Worker's Party (PKK/KADEK/KONGRA-GEL) since 1984. Press and NGO estimates of the number of fatalities that have resulted from the conflict in the South East of Turkey range between 30,000 and 40,000.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has made no independent assessment of these figures.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the statement released on 25 January by the Turkish Human Rights Association Ynsan Haklari DerneDý regarding the number of honour killings in Turkey; and if he will make a statement. [213240]

Mr. MacShane: The Turkish Human Rights Association (HRA) released a press statement on 18 January detailing four separate cases of honour killings. In the statement the HRA called on state officials to take all necessary measures to stop honour killings and to protect women.

The Turkish Government's domestic reform programme has strengthened the rights of women in Turkey. The Turkish Government adopted a new Penal Code in September 2004 that removes sentence reductions for honour killings. The last few months have seen several landmark sentences handed down for honour killings. The Turkish Government passed a new Municipalities Law in December 2004 requiring municipalities to open shelters for women in communities of more than 50,000 people, and a package of constitutional amendments was passed in May 2004 that confirms equality between men and women.

The Turkish Government's commitment to address honour crimes and ensure the full protection of women's rights was demonstrated by their decision to co-table with the UK a successful resolution in the UN General Assembly on 'honour crimes'.

According to Ka-Mer (Turkey's largest women's NGO) at least 200 females are murdered by their families in Turkey each year. Accurate official statistics do not exist, as police records do not show whether 'honour' was a contributing factor in a murder.

United States

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his recent talks with Dr. Condoleezza Rice. [211263]

Mr. Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary visited Washington on 24 January to say farewell to the outgoing Secretary of State, Colin Powell. During his visit he also had talks with other senior officials, including the then National Security Adviser, Dr. Rice. A wide range of subjects was discussed, including Iraq, the Middle East, Iran and the EU/China Arms Embargo.

These same topics were discussed when Dr. Rice called on the Foreign Secretary in London on 4 February, in her new role as Secretary of State.

Vietnam

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Vietnamese Government about the recent detention of six Mennonite pastors and the allegations of torture that they made on their release. [213111]

Mr. Alexander: The EU is in contact with the Vietnamese authorities about the case of Reverend Nguyen Hong Quang and is seeking permission for EU representatives to attend his appeal hearing in Ho Chi Minh City. The EU also continues to follow developments in the cases of his Mennonite colleagues with close interest.

We are concerned by the allegations made by the Mennonite prisoners in Vietnam. We have not made representations to the Vietnamese authorities about these specific allegations. However, during the most recent EU-Vietnam dialogue meeting on human rights issues held on 17 December 2004 and attended by our Ambassador in Hanoi the detention and treatment of prisoners was among the concerns raised by the EU side.

We also regularly raise our concerns on human rights issues bilaterally. We will continue to press the Vietnamese government to adhere to its international human rights obligations at every suitable opportunity.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what technical support the UK has offered the Government of Vietnam to facilitate World Trade Organisation membership. [213275]

Mr. Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the reply my hon. Friend the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Mr. MacShane) gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Wirral, South (Mr. Chapman) on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 229W.

HEALTH

Alcohol

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on *(a)* treating and *(b)* rehabilitating alcoholics in each of the last seven years. [213060]

Miss Melanie Johnson: No information is routinely collected on this expenditure. A study by Alcohol Concern in 2002, and developed in the Prime Minister's strategy unit's paper, "Alcohol Misuse: How much does it cost?" (September 2003) gives an overall figure for treatment services of £96.1 million in 2002.

Ambulance Services/Trusts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many paramedic ambulances are based in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* each constituency in Lancashire. [212040]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what minimum standards of service must be met before he approves the merger of ambulance trusts. [211902]

Ms Rosie Winterton: There are no set standards, but as a general rule, before he approves the merger of any national health service trusts, the Secretary of State would need to be satisfied that appropriate consultation has been undertaken locally; any organisational changes are in the interests of patients and staff and would help improve performance against the requirements and standards set out in "National Standards, Local Action" and other relevant documents.

Avian Flu

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what preparations he has put in place to ensure that UK citizens are protected against the risk of contracting bird flu; and if he will make a statement. [214511]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* There is no confirmed evidence of person-to-person spread of avian influenza in south-east Asia. Guidance for the national health service on the detection, diagnosis and treatment of potential cases of avian flu has been prepared by the Health Protection Agency (HPA), in collaboration with the Department, and is published on the HPA's website. Antiviral agents are available within the NHS for the treatment and prevention of infection.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has also published guidance on the handling of outbreaks of avian influenza in poultry. This includes advice to those who have either been involved in the slaughter of infected birds or who have had close contact with them.

Burns Units

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many specialist burns services units there are in *(a)* the Greater London region and *(b)* each strategic health authority in London. [214325]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not collected centrally. It is for primary care trusts to work in partnership with strategic health authorities and other stakeholders to ensure the provision of health services to meet the needs of their local populations.

Cancer Research

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will commission research into whether lycopene found in organic red ketchup is a useful agent against cancer; and if he will make a statement. [211314]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Current evidence shows that people who eat relatively more fruit and vegetables have a lower risk of developing heart disease and some types of cancer. The Government have no plans for specific research on the potential benefits of lycopene in this regard.

Tomatoes, whether organic or not, are a good source of lycopene. However, fruit and vegetables contain a range of other chemical compounds, including anti-oxidants such as vitamins C and E, beta-carotene and flavonoids. It is this combination, rather than any one particular component, which is thought to have a protective effect against certain diseases.

Whatever the benefits of ketchup products in respect of lycopene, some contribute relatively high levels of salt and sugar to the diet. The Government continue to work with the food industry to increase the range of healthier options available to consumers.

Chorley Hospital

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intensive care beds were located in Chorley hospital in each of the last five years. [212043]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information is not collected in the format requested. The information shown in the table relates to the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Trust, which includes Chorley hospital. Data before 2002 relates to the two predecessor organisations (Chorley and South Ribble Trust and Preston Acute Hospital NHS Trust) which merged to form the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust on 1 August 2002.

	Number of intensive care beds
30 September 1999	11
14 July 2000	12
16 July 2001	13
16 July 2002	14
16 July 2003	14
16 July 2004	14

Source:
Department of Health statistics

Communicable Diseases (NHS Staff)

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what tests for communicable diseases are conducted on those coming from abroad to work in the health service. [213184]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* Health care workers joining the national health service should have checks for tuberculosis, hepatitis B, varicella and rubella, including the provision of immunisation if appropriate.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to increase the number of dental academic staff to take account of his undertaking to increase dental undergraduate places by an extra 170 per year. [211730]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* We have recurring funding, building up to £29 million per annum by 2010–11, to support the additional training places, which includes provision for the recruitment of more academic staff and enhancing the terms of service of existing staff. We are also working jointly with the Department for Education and Skills to address issues relating to the recruitment and retention of academic staff.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on progress towards recruiting an extra 1,000 full-time dentists into the NHS by October 2005. [211731]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* Steady progress is being made towards the 1,000 whole-time equivalent dentists target by the end of October 2005.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have signed up for the new dental contract to date; and what assessment his Department has made of the ages of those who have signed up. [210107]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* We are committed to introducing new contractual arrangements for national health service dentistry by April 2006. The new arrangements draw on experience from personal dental services (PDS) pilot schemes and dentists may gain advanced benefit of many aspects of the new arrangements by moving to PDS. Some 3,500 dentists in 1,300 dental practices are working under PDS arrangements and there are some 500 further practices with applications in the pipeline. When those applications have been approved there will be some 20 per cent. of practices in PDS. Information on the ages of these dentists is not held centrally.

Diabetes Treatment

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment he has made of the European Medicines Evaluation Agency's call for more clinical trials on analogues used in diabetes treatment; [210222]

(2) what assessment he has made of the possible carcinogenic effect of analogues prescribed for diabetes; [210223]

(3 what his policy is on the mitogenic potency of insulin analogues. [210225]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Insulins are known to have a weak mitogenic effect on some cells in cell culture. Before any licence is granted, a full and thorough review of all the available data takes place to ensure that the product is of appropriate standards of safety, quality and efficacy. The European regulatory guidelines "Points to Consider", a document on the non-clinical assessment of the carcinogenic potential of insulin analogues provides guidance to industry on the general approach to the assessment of new insulin analogues, and these points need to be addressed before a licence would be granted. For any application, the documentation, including clinical trial details and results, accompanying the formal application for the product licence should be consistent with current European and national legal requirements and guidelines relating to applications for marketing authorisations.

As with all new medicines, several insulin analogues are currently under intensive monitoring by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency and the committee on safety of medicines. We are not aware of any clinical evidence to suggest that diabetic patients who receive either human insulins, insulin analogues or animal insulins are at an increased risk of developing cancer. Any further clinical trial data would always be considered to be of benefit and welcomed.

Faye Emily Brandon

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Health Care Commission will report on the death of Faye Emily Brandon, of Loddiswell, who died at Derriford hospital, Plymouth on 14 April 2004 (case ref: C200409 0409). [214075]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* I understand from the Chairman of the Healthcare Commission that it has received a complaint concerning the issues surrounding the death of Faye Emily Brandon. It expects to reply to the complainant by the middle of the month.

Food Standards Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Food Standards Agency spent on inspecting and auditing the performance of local authorities in the most recent year for which figures are available. [211945]

Miss Melanie Johnson: In the 2003–04 financial year the Food Standards Agency spent £505,135 on the auditing of the performance of United Kingdom local authorities with regard to food standards, food hygiene and feeding stuffs law enforcement. This figure includes staffing costs for the agency's audit teams and other additional costs associated with the operation of the audit scheme.

Health Promotion

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent on health promotion among black and minority ethnic communities in England in each year since 2000; [213893]

(2) how much was spent on health promotion in each year from 2000. [213894]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on expenditure in the national health service under the general heading of health promotion is not held centrally nor is central departmental expenditure accounted for under that heading. It is not therefore possible to identify such expenditure that is aimed at particular groups.

HIV/AIDS

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in the United Kingdom have resources to treat HIV/AIDS. [214386]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Information on the number of hospitals treating people with HIV in England is not available centrally. Information relating to Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland is a matter for the devolved administrations.

Since 2002–03, funding for HIV treatment care and prevention has been incorporated into unified allocations. These allocations are weighted in accordance with the number of diagnosed HIV infected persons by primary care trust of residence.

Kidney Disease (Children)

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment has been made of the likelihood of developing kidney disease of children under the age of six years consuming more than three grams of salt per day; [213513]

(2) what assessment has been made of the likelihood of developing kidney disease of children under the age of *(a)* seven and *(b)* 12 months consuming more than one gram of salt per day. [213516]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) assessed the effect of salt on health in their report published in 2003 and made recommendations for salt intake in children for the first time. SACN did not specifically consider salt intake and its relationship to kidney disease in children.

Lancashire Teaching Hospital Trust

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the financial position of the Lancashire Teaching Hospital Trust. [212042]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority reports that the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust is forecasting a deficit of £3.0 million for the current financial year.

Maternity Care

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department has taken to ensure that women in the north-west receive appropriate *(a)* pre-natal and *(b)* maternity medical care. [213556]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We are committed to the principles of good quality women-centred maternity care and expect the national health service to provide a range of maternity services. Decisions about patterns of service provision and delivery are matters for individual health authorities and trusts to determine locally, taking into account local population needs, priorities and resources.

The Government, in the maternity standard of the national service framework (NSF) for children, young people and maternity, published in September 2004, have set out their 10-year vision for maternity services. The standard advocates that NHS maternity care providers and primary care trusts, which will be at the centre of service delivery, should plan and provide maternity services based upon an up-to-date assessment of the needs of the local population.

Mental Health (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average waiting time for a mental health appointment in Lancashire is; [213910]

(2) how many people consulted an NHS mental health doctor in Lancashire in each of the last three years. [213911]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collated centrally.

MRSA

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to raise public awareness of MRSA and potential safeguards against contracting infections. [208808]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 17 January 2005]:* I regard it as a high priority for the Department and the national health service to ensure that the public have reliable and useful information about Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), the source of blood infections and measures to reduce the risk of infection. There are a number of ways in which the public are informed.

The Department publishes the details of MRSA rates in every acute trust in England, and in December published "A Simple Guide to MRSA" by Professor Brian Duerden, the inspector of microbiology and infection control. This is available at http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/HealthcareAcquiredInfection/.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has produced a patient information leaflet, "MRSA: Information for patients", which is available from NHS hospitals or on the HPA website at http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/.

The NHS Direct online health encyclopaedia has comprehensive information on MRSA available at www.nhs.direct.nhs.uk or by telephoning NHS Direct.

Individual trusts are responsible for informing future and current patients about their stay in hospital, including infection control measures.

One of the most important ways of reduce the risk of transmission of MRSA is by maintaining high standards of hand hygiene, and an important hand hygiene initiative is currently being rolled out through NHS hospitals. This is the "cleanyourhands" campaign, which includes the provision of patient information leaflets and posters. The patient information leaflet for a patient entering a Clean Hands Partner hospital invites patients to be a partner in maintaining high hand hygiene standards. The leaflet is also available on the National Patient Safety Agency website at www.npsa.nhs.uk/cleanyourhands. I expect all NHS acute trusts in England either to participate in this campaign or to have equivalent hand hygiene measures already in place.

NHS Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the effect the introduction of charges for *(a)* eye tests and *(b)* dental check-ups had on demand for these services. [210365]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* In 1989, charges were introduced for dental examinations and eligibility for national health service sight tests was restricted to children, people suffering from or predisposed to eye disease and people on low incomes. Over the period 1988 to 1990, the number of dental examinations in England fell from 20 million to 19 million per annum and the number of NHS sight tests from 12 million to 5 million per annum. Following our decision in 1999 to restore eligibility for free NHS sight tests to people aged 60, nearly 10 million NHS sight tests are now carried out annually in England.

Orthodontists (North-east)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were awaiting treatment by a consultant orthodontist on the latest date for which figures are available; and what the average time taken to obtain treatment once placed on the waiting list was in *(a)* Sunderland Royal hospital, *(b)* Durham university hospital and *(c)* Hartlepool university hospital in the last year for which figures are available. [210139]

Miss Melanie Johnson: At the end of October 2004, there were no patients waiting for treatment by a consultant orthodontist at either Durham university hospital or Hartlepool university hospital.

With regard to your inquiry relating to Sunderland Royal hospital, this is a matter for the chair of City Hospitals Sunderland National Health Service Foundation Trust. My right hon. Friend, the Minister of State for Health (Mr. Hutton), has written to Mr. David Graham, chair, informing him of your inquiry.

Out-of-hours Services

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers of 20 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1119W, on out-of-hours services, what assessment he has made of the reasons for the decision of the North Yorkshire Emergency Doctors co-operative to go into administration. [213579]

Miss Melanie Johnson: North Yorkshire Emergency Doctors (NYED) co-operative was taken into voluntary administration due to financial difficulties. The primary care trusts that contracted out of hours general practitioner services from NYED have now put in place alternative arrangements that will meet the national quality requirements. The service to patients has been maintained at all times.

Passive Smoking

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have died in each of the last five years whose death was partly or wholly attributable to passive smoking. [215168]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The 2004 report of the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH), which was published alongside the White Paper "Choosing Health", states that new evidence reinforces and strengthens the conclusion of the 1998 report from SCOTH which estimated that there are several hundred deaths a year due to lung cancer caused by second-hand smoke.

The Committee did not estimate the number of deaths due to other causes linked to second-hand smoke, such as heart disease or sudden infant death syndrome, or the number of deaths in the workplace. Copies are available in the Library.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the scheme for exemption from prescription charges for people with chronic diseases was established; and in which years since its establishment it has been re-examined. [209797]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The list has since been reviewed on a number of occasions, most recently 1998 as part of the Government's comprehensive spending review.

Public Houses

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information he has obtained from local authorities on the *(a)* number and *(b)* proportion of pubs that do not serve prepared food. [210257]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* In 2004 information on pubs serving and preparing food was obtained by the Food Standards Agency from a survey of local authorities carried out by the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS).

This survey was carried out by LACORS via their food liaison group network with the objective of making an overall estimate of the proportion (percentage) of pubs that prepare and sell food (more than snacks such as crisps).

Residential Care Costs

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the annual increase in fees for residential care for residents in properties *(a)* owned or run by Kent county council and *(b)* in Kent run by Southern Cross Healthcare was between 2003–04 and 2004–05. [214809]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* The Department does not hold records of the increase in care home fees charged by local authorities (LAs). We expect this information to be held by individual LAs.

Salt

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what efforts his Department has made to raise awareness of the salt content in processed food. [213115]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Together with the Food Standards Agency (FSA), I have been leading discussions with industry to identify and implement a range of proposals to increase opportunities for people to make healthy choices in what they eat. As outlined in the recent White Paper, "Choosing Health", these are aimed at increasing the availability of healthier food including reducing the levels of salt, added sugars and saturated fat in prepared and processed food and drink.

At a stakeholder event on salt in November 2003, I called for industry to submit plans to reduce salt in processed food. To date discussions have been held with, and commitments received to reduce salt from over 60 organisations.

The FSA launched a high profile public health campaign in September 2004 to raise awareness of health issues surrounding high salt intakes. Initial evaluation of the campaign shows it has had a very positive impact; and research has shown an increase in consumers who are making an effort to cut how much salt they eat and change their shopping behaviour. The next stage of the campaign is currently being considered. The FSA also publishes regular surveys of the salt content of processed foods, which have included soup, pizza, sausages, and baked beans and pasta in tomato sauce.

Smoking-related Diseases

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on the procedures adopted by the NHS in determining whether a patient is suffering from a smoking-related disease. [214061]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* There are no general procedures adopted by the national health service in determining whether a patient is suffering from a smoking related disease. However, it is standard medical practice to ask patients about their smoking history.

Social Workers

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average number of social worker vacancies was in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority; and how many were posts dealing with children in each case. [213916]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department refers to data collected annually by the Local Government Employers Organisation through the social services workforce survey which suggests that national vacancy rates for England have remained around 10/11 per cent. for social workers since 2001, when data became available in this form.

Trans Fats

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the health effects of partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats) in the food supply; and if he will make a statement. [210427]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Recent research has been carried out by the European Food Safety Authority on the presence, consumption and the health effects of trans-unsaturated fatty acids (TFAs) in foods. It concluded that, given current dietary intake of TFAs in many countries including the United Kingdom, their potential to significantly increase heart disease risk is much lower than that of saturated fats.

Dietary surveys of the UK population show intakes of TFAs are below the agreed dietary recommendations, whereas intakes for saturated fats exceed them.

The Government continue to monitor developments in the evidence base, which might influence their future advice on the issue. The Government consider reducing saturated fat consumption to be of greater significance for public health.

Tricyclics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the timetable is for Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's review of tricyclic drugs; and what methodology the agency will use for the review. [213152]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The committee on safety of medicines' expert working group on the safety of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors recommended that a systematic review of published and unpublished placebo controlled randomised clinical trials involving tricyclic antidepressants was required to assess whether they are associated with an increased risk of suicidal thoughts, self-harm and suicide. The timetable and methodology for this review are under consideration but yet to be finalised.

Waiting Times

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if he will list health authorities where radiotherapy waiting times do not comply with the clinical guidelines on the maximum acceptable delays before the start of treatment; [212212]

(2) what plans he has to reduce radiotherapy waiting times for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* brain cancer; [212215]

(3) what assessment he has made of trends in radiotherapy waiting times. [212216]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Data on waiting times for radiotherapy are not collected centrally. From information provided by the Royal College of Radiologists, we understand that waiting times for radiotherapy in some parts of the country are unacceptably long.

The NHS Cancer Plan sets out maximum waiting time targets for cancer treatment which may include radiotherapy where this is given as a first definitive treatment. From December 2001, there is a one month maximum wait from diagnosis to first treatment for breast cancer and a one month wait from urgent general practitioner referral to first treatment for children's cancers, testicular cancer and acute leukaemia. From 2002, there is a maximum two-month wait from urgent referral to treatment for breast cancer. From 2005, there will be a maximum two-month wait from urgent referral to treatment and a maximum one-month wait from diagnosis to first treatment for all cancers.

To tackle radiotherapy waiting times, we are increasing the numbers of therapy radiographers in post and in training, making better use of existing staff, making unprecedented investment in new radiotherapy equipment, and streamlining the patient journey.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he plans to take to reduce waiting times for treatment for patients with *(a)* cancer and *(b)* brain cancer who are initially referred non-urgently but are identified as suffering from cancer. [212213]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The NHS Cancer Plan sets out our strategy to reduce waiting times for cancer patients. A target of one month from diagnosis with breast cancer to first treatment was introduced in December 2002. 98 per cent. of patients with breast cancer were treated within this standard in the last quarter (July to September 2004). From 2005, there will be a maximum wait of one month from diagnosis to first treatment for all cancer patients, including brain cancer, which will ensure that those patients who were non-urgently referred but subsequently diagnosed with cancer receive prompt treatment. Progress towards this target is being achieved through increased investment, additional staffing levels, installing new and replacement radiotherapy and diagnostic facilities and streamlining care processes through the Cancer Services Collaborative—Improvement Partnership.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Council Tax Benefit

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of pensioners in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Great Britain entitled to council tax benefit in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. [210607]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested.

Estimates of the number of pensioners in receipt of council tax benefit, averaged over each year, and the number of entitled non-recipients are available for Great Britain only. These are published in the Department's annual statistical series: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up".

Statistics for 2002–03 have been published today and placed in the Library alongside existing publications.

Direct Benefit Payments

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions his Department has had with organisations that represent blind and partially-sighted people on problems they may encounter in accessing payments of benefits and pensions through direct payment methods. [214077]

Mr. Pond: Several meetings have been held with customer representative organisations, including the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), Age Concern, Help the Aged, and Citizens Advice. Discussions at these meetings helped to ensure that there was a shared understanding of the detailed implications of the move from paper-based methods of payment to the various direct payment options, and a common appreciation of the type of issues that needed to be considered for blind and partially sighted customers as well as other customer groups.

These meetings also had a key role in shaping the detailed design of the cheque payment for the small minority of customers who cannot manage direct payment.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what access arrangements are in place at Post Offices for benefit and pension recipients who are unable, due to age or disability, to access their benefits via *(a)* banking methods and *(b)* giro cheques. [214078]

Mr. Pond: Most banks, building societies and basic bank accounts accessible at the Post Office have arrangements that will allow someone, including a person who holds Power of Attorney, to access the customer's account with their permission. The precise arrangement would depend on which type of account they have and with which account provider.

Customers who have a Post Office card account can arrange to have a Permanent Agent to collect their monies on their behalf. A Permanent Agent is issued with a second card and their own PIN. The Post Office card account does not support Power of Attorney.

Customers in receipt of a cheque payment may instruct an agent to collect their money from the Post Office using the declaration on the reverse of the cheque.

If a customer is unable to manage their own affairs, the Secretary of State can appoint an appropriate person to receive pensions, benefits and allowances of the person for whom they are appointed. The appointee can use an existing account or open an ordinary or basic account that gives access at the Post Office or can have a Post Office card account to receive pensions, benefits and allowances.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* attendance allowance in (i) the City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and (ii) the constituency of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central in each year since 1996. [215057]

Maria Eagle: The administration of attendance allowance and disability living allowance are a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 8 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Disability and Carers Service, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle MP, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people received *(a)* disability living allowance and *(b)* attendance allowance in (i) the City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and (ii) the constituency of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central in each year since 1996.

Thousand

August:	*Disability living allowance recipients in the local authority of City of Newcastle upon Tyne*	*Disability living allowance recipients in the constituency of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central*	*Attendance allowance recipients in the local authority of City of Newcastle upon Tyne*	*Attendance allowance recipients in the constituency of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central*
2004	14.3	4.1	7.0	1.7
2003	14.2	3.9	7.0	1.6
2002	14.1	4.0	6.4	1.5
2001	14.2	4.1	6.7	1.9
2000	13.4	3-7	6.7	1.9
1999	13.6	3.7	6.6	1.8
1998	12.8	3.4	5.9	1.7
1997	12.1	3.2	5.7	1.9
1996	10.7	n/a	5.3	2.1

n/a = Not available.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and quoted in thousands.

2. Number is based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.

3. Parliamentary constituencies and local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

4. From November 2002, the methodology for producing these figures was changed to allow statistics to be published much sooner. This has resulted in a small increase in the reported caseload. This is because some cases which have actually terminated but have not yet been updated on the computer system are now included.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each electoral ward in Stoke-on-Trent claimed disability living allowance in each of the past seven years. [211712]

Maria Eagle: The administration of disability living allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Mark Fisher, dated 27 January 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Disability and Carers Service, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle MP, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each electoral ward in Stoke-on-Trent claimed Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in each of the past seven years.

The number of people in each electoral ward of Stoke-on-Trent, in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, is as follows:

Table 1: 1998 ward boundaries—parliamentary constituency Stoke-on-Trent central

	DLA claimants—August		
Ward name	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Abbey	915	925	980
Berryhill	885	905	885
Brookhouse	960	965	990
Hanley Green	675	690	720
Hartshill	410	420	430
Shelton	885	855	880
Stoke West	585	590	635

Table 2: 2003 Ward boundaries—parliamentary constituency Stoke-on-Trent central

	DLA claimants—August		
Ward name	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Abbey Green	1,030	1,060	1,125
Bentilee and Townsend	1,280	1,335	1,375
Berryhill and Hanley East	830	875	900
Burslem South	940	980	1,010
Fenton	835	860	875
Hanley West and Shelton	600	610	655
Hartshill and Penkhull	475	460	480
Northwood and Birches Head	785	780	810
Stoke and Trent Vale	695	740	755

Notes:

1. Information is only available for six years (1998–2003).

2. 1998 to 2000 figures are based on 1998 ward boundaries.

3. 2001 to 2003 figures are based on April 2003 ward boundaries.

4. In 2001–03, Berryhill and Hanley East; Burslem South, Fenton, Hanley West and Shelton; North and Birches Head; Stoke and Trent Vale wards are included as they are partially in the Stoke-on-Trent Central Parliamentary Constituency.

5. DLA figures include all claimants including children, working age and pensioners claiming DLA.

6. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5 to protect the confidentiality of individual claimants.

Source:

Information Directorate, Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions.

I hope this is helpful.

Disabled People

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with disabilities in Coventry, South constituency have returned to work in the last five years. [211205]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The available Information on the number of people with disabilities who have benefited from the New Deal programme in Coventry, South is in the following tables.

Number of people with disabilities who have benefited from the following New Deal programmes in Coventry, South; New Deal for Young People; New Deal 25 plus; New Deal for Lone Parents; New Deal 50 plus

October to September	*Individuals into work*
1999–2000	30
2000–01	30
2001–02	30
2002–03	30
2003–04	30
Total	150

Notes:

1. New Deal for Partners information is only available at national level.
2. New Deal for Young People started in January 1998; New Deal 25 plus started in July 1998; New Deal for Lone Parents started in October 1998; New Deal 50 plus started in April 2000.
3. New Deal 50 plus information relates to the number of New Deal 50 plus employment credit starts to March 2003. Information on the number of New Deal 50 plus recorded job entries from April 2003 to September 2004 is not available at constituency level.
4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason, components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

New Deal for Disabled People information is not available at constituency level. The available information for the Coventry and Warwickshire Jobcentre Plus district is in the table.

Number of individuals who have work from New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) in the Coventry and Warwickshire Jobcentre Plus district

	Individuals into work
2001–01 (July to September)	0
October to September	
2001–02	40
2002–03	90
2003–04	220
Total	340

Notes:

1. Starts figures relate to the number of individuals registering with an NDDP Job Broker.
2. Individuals into work figures relate to the number of individuals gaining jobs through Job Broker jobs and individuals gaining jobs through Jobcentre Plus.
3. The NDDP programme is available to people in receipt of a disability or health related benefit and started in July 2001.
4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason, components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

In addition to New Deal there are a number of programmes such as Access to Work, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP designed to help disabled people return to work. Details of the number of people helped to return to work through these programmes is not available at constituency or Jobcentre Plus district level.

Jobcentre Plus also offers interviews with a personal adviser to all disabled people making new or repeat claims to qualifying benefits to ensure they are aware of the help and opportunities available to them.

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people with disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent have returned to work in each of the last seven years. [213197]

Jane Kennedy: The available information on the number of people with disabilities who have benefited from the New Deal programme in Stoke-on-Trent is in the table.

Number of people with disabilities who have benefited from the following New Deal programmes in Stoke-on-Trent[1]*—New Deal for Young People; New Deal 25 Plus; New Deal for Lone Parents; New Deal 50 plus*

October to September	*Individuals into work*
1997–98	20
1998–99	90
1999–2000	130
2000–01	150
2001–02	190
2002–03	170
2003–04	100
Total	850

[1] Figures are for the three Stoke-on-Trent parliamentary constituencies (Stoke-on-Trent, North, Stoke-on-Trent, Central and Stoke-on-Trent, South).

Notes:

1. New Deal for Partners information is only available at national level.
2. New Deal for Young People started in January 1998; New Deal 25 plus started in July 1998; New Deal for Lone Parents started in October 1998; New Deal 50 plus started in April 2000.
3. New Deal 50 plus information relates to the number of New Deal 50 plus employment credit starts to March 2003. Information on the number of New Deal 50 plus recorded job entries from April 2003 to September 2004 is not available at constituency level.
4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason, components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

New Deal for Disabled People information is not available at constituency level. The available information for the Staffordshire Jobcentre Plus District is in the table.

Number of people who have benefited from New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) in the Staffordshire Jobcentre Plus district

	Individuals into work
2001–01 (July to September)	0
October to September	
2001–02	40
2002–03	240
2003–04	520
Total	800

Notes:

1. Starts figures relate to the number of individuals registering with an NDDP Job Broker.
2. Individuals into work figures relate to the number of individuals gaining jobs through Job Broker jobs and individuals gaining jobs through Jobcentre Plus.
3. The NDDP programme is available to people in receipt of a disability or health related benefit and started in July 2001.
4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason, components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

In addition to New Deal there are a number of programmes such as Access to Work, Work Preparation and WORKSTEP designed to help disabled people return to work. Details of the number of people helped to return to work through these programmes is not available at constituency or Jobcentre Plus District level.

Jobcentre Plus also offers interviews with a personal adviser to all disabled people making new or repeat claims to qualifying benefits to ensure they are aware of the help and opportunities available to them.

Forced Labour

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations have been made by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department to the International Labour Organisation about (i) the content and (ii) the publication date of the jointly commissioned report on forced labour in the UK. [215483]

Mr. Pond: DWP officials continue to be in regular contact with the ILO about this matter and, in conjunction with other government departments, are actively looking at the detail of the draft report which was commissioned by the ILO and TUG. We will consider the issues of content and publication further when we have received their recommendations.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the *(a)* start-up costs and *(b)* annual running costs of the incapacity benefit pilot projects, broken down by cost of (i) personal advisers, (ii) the new return to work credit, (iii) condition management courses, (iv) work programmes and (v) other costs. [215332]

Maria Eagle: The start-up costs for the incapacity benefit reform (Pathways to Work) pilots were incurred in the 2003–04 financial year and amounted £6,137,080. These include the costs of developing an extremely new and innovative learning and development package for personal advisers and work with NHS partners on the development of the Condition Management Programme.

The running costs for the Pathways to Work pilots are in the table.

Pathways to work pilots running costs

£

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Personal Advisers	626,895	2,619,651	3,619,136
Return to Work Credit	248,650	5,731,923	10,688,675
Condition Management	887,500	8,924,074	12,194,577
Work Programmes	1,195,436	7,444,959	6,755,478
Other costs	2,381,806	18,320,328	26,032,134

The figures for Personal Advisers also include some costs of Jobcentre Plus staff responsible for processing incapacity benefit that cannot be separated out.

The "other" costs given include funding for the evaluation of Pathways to Work, costs for medical services delivered by ATOS Origin and additional support for Pilot offices.

Lyons Report

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) which of the recommendations from Sir Michael Lyons' report relating to his Department have been implemented; [214598]

(2) how much money his Department plans to invest in the costs of moving jobs in his Department from London and the south-east into other regions; [214599]

(3) if he will make a statement on the effect on Merseyside of planned relocation of jobs in his Department from London and the south-east; and how many such jobs will be relocated to Merseyside as a result of Sir Michael Lyons' report. [214600]

Maria Eagle: As at the end of December 2004 the Department had relocated 2,318 posts from London and the south-east to other regions.

Since June 2003 around 300 posts have been relocated from London and the south-east to Merseyside as part of business restructuring. No specific new plans relating to Merseyside were included in the Department's submission to Sir Michael Lyons.

The movement of posts from London and south-east forms part of the Department's wider work force planning and efficiency programme. No separate costs are currently attributable to relocation activity from London and the south-east.

New Deal for Lone Parents

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the total expenditure on the New Deal for Lone Parents was in each year that the scheme has been in operation; [210056]

(2) what proportion of the budget for New Deal for Lone Parents has been spent on administration in each year that the scheme has been in operation. [210057]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

Expenditure on New Deal for Lone Parents

	Administrative expenditure		*Programme expenditure*	*Total*
	£ million	*Percentage*	*(£ million)*	*(£ million)*
1998–99	17	94	1	18
1999–2000	26	68	12	38
2000–01	18	56	14	32
2001–02	73	89	9	82
2002–03	71	82	16	87
2003–04	62	77	19	81

Notes:

1. Figures for 1998–99 to 2002–03 are outturn figures. Figures for 2003–04 are estimated outturn figures.
2. Following agreement with HM Treasury to remove the 'ring fences' from individual New Deals, New Deal administrative expenditure is no longer accounted for separately. Figures for 2002–03 and later years are estimates
3. Administration costs cover pay, travel and subsistence and accommodation, and include IT, estates and other non-staff costs. Programme costs on New Deal for Lone Parents will include cases where the Department buys in provision, for example to send a lone parent on a college course, or where a refund is made to a lone parent for expenditure such as cost of child care.

Source:

Department for Work and Pensions Departmental Report 2004

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213794]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES). Information for the period prior to June 2001 refers to the former DSS and ES.

The Department is committed to investing in its people and actively supports learning and development for all staff. The Department is accredited as an Investor in People. Full information on the costs of staff training and staff development days organised by the Department is not available. This is because records do not differentiate between procedural training and personal development activities or between training delivered on DWP premises or elsewhere.

However, overall expenditure on staff learning and development by the Department and its predecessors is in the table. Information for periods prior to 1999–2000 is not available.

	Expenditure (£ million)
1999–2000	81.145
2000–01	90.034
2001–02	97.319

The figures include trainee and trainer costs, management and administration overheads. Costs for accommodation, where the Departmental estate has been used, are not included.

In addition to formal training, staff are developed by a variety of other means including e-learning, coaching and mentoring in the work place. Since 2002–03, the cost of this other development has been included in the Department's overall expenditure on staff learning and development. Information for 2002–03 and 2003–04 is in the table.

	Investment (£ million)
2002–03	132.23
2003–04	175.43

Telephone Answering Services

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which telephone answering services in the agencies for which the Department is responsible are *(a)* staffed by employees of the Department, *(b)* serviced by call centres in the UK and *(c)* serviced by overseas call centres. [208515]

Maria Eagle: Currently, DWP has 122 call centres, all of which are staffed by employees of the Department except: one centre in Rotherham which deals with applications for pension credit, centres in Bolton and Liverpool which deliver the conversion of benefit and pensions customers to direct payment, a centre in Bristol which handles winter fuel payment queries together with an out of hours service for the National Benefit Fraud Hotline.

In addition, the Department runs a number of marketing and information campaigns and the additional call centre capacity needed to support this work is usually outsourced. This is the case for the New Deal Information Line also based in Bristol, the Pensions Information Line based in Ashby de la Zouche and the Direct Payment Information Line based in Crewe. It is normal business practice for the Department to manage large scale and sometimes temporary operations in this way.

The premises and operating activities of all these centres are wholly based in Great Britain. The Department does not use any overseas based call centres.

Training Courses

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* cost to the Department, *(b)* title and *(c)* location was of each training course organised by his Department for its staff in each financial year since 1997–98. [200386]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Work and Pension Pensions was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security (DSS) and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service (ES). Information for the period prior to June 2001 refers to the former DSS and ES.

Full information on the cost, title and location of each training course organised by the Department could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However, overall expenditure on staff learning and development by the Department and its predecessors is in the table. Information for periods prior to 1999–2000 is not available.

	Expenditure (£ million)
1999–2000	81.145
2000–01	90.034
2001–02	97.319

The figures include trainee and trainer costs, management and administration overheads. Costs for accommodation, where the departmental estate has been used, are not included.

In addition to formal training, staff are developed by a variety of other means including e-learning, coaching and mentoring in the work place. Since 2002–03, the cost of this other development has been included in the Department's overall expenditure on staff learning and development. Information for 2002–03 and 2003–04 is in the table.

	Investment (£ million)
2002–03	132.23
2003–04	175.43

NORTHERN IRELAND

Belfast City Airport (Road Congestion)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the roads service has made of the impact of the removal of the planning restriction on the total number of annual passengers using the Belfast city airport on usage and congestion on the *(a)* Sydenham by-pass and *(b)* West Link. [209205]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Lady Hermon dated 21 January 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has been made of the impact of the removal of the planning restriction on the total number of annual passengers using the Belfast City Airport on usage and congestion on the Sydenham bypass and the West Link (209205). I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as the Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service has not yet been consulted on any proposal to remove the planning restriction, however, the planning application for the new terminal building and entrance was supported by a Transport Assessment, which provided a detailed analysis of the development's projected traffic impact on the local road network. Any proposed change to planning restrictions that would alter the impact on the road network will be examined to ensure that where necessary, appropriate mitigating measures are provided by the applicant.

It should be noted that the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) 2015, published in November 2004, is bringing forward proposals that will improve public transport access to the Belfast City Airport, as well as proposals for increasing the capacity of both the Sydenham by-pass and Westlink.

I hope this information is helpful.

Correspondence

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his target time is in 2004–05 *(a)* to reply to letters from hon. Members and *(b)* for the officials in his Office to reply to letters received directly from members of the public. [202508]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The figures sought by the hon. Member are included in the Northern Ireland Office departmental Report 2004, a copy of which is available in the Library

Dentists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of dentists in the Province. [215367]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report* column 1069W.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many contracts in his Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if he will make a statement. [211615]

Mr. Pearson: The details of contracts granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* jointly in the last two years are set out in the table.

Purpose of contract	*Open to competition*	*Value (£)*	*Period*
(a) EDS			
2002–03	—	0	—
2003–04	—	0	—
(b) Fujitsu			
2002–03			
Data Entry	No	10,049	4 months
Data Entry	Yes	16,157	2 months
Web Development	No	95,000	6 months
Personal Computers	Yes	40,000	n/a
Managed Services	Yes	28,000,000	10 years
2003–04			
Data Entry	No	7,405	1 year
Data Entry	No	6,233	4 months
(c) Jointly			
2002–03	—	0	—
2003–04	—	0	—

Diabetes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to ensure equal access to diabetes services in all areas of the Province. [214924]

Angela Smith: In June 2003 the Crest Taskforce published a report on the development of services for people with diabetes and the Department is committed to the full implementation of the report.

Each of the Health and Social Services Boards has established local implementation groups to take forward the detailed planning and implementation of the recommendations made by the Taskforce. The Department has also set up a Regional Diabetes Steering Group to monitor the work of the local groups and develop a plan to ensure that developments are taken forward on a co-ordinated basis to ensure that the delivery of services is of high quality and is accessible to all in the community.

Economic Activity (East Londonderry)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the employment rates of people of working age in the East Londonderry constituency were *(a)* on the latest date for which figures are available and *(b)* on 1 May 2001. [210847]

Mr. Gardiner: The most recent figures available from the quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) relate to the period September-November (autumn) 2004. These estimate that the working age employment rate for East Londonderry Parliamentary Constituency Area was 68.3 per cent. This compares to an estimated employment rate of 60.6 per cent. in the period March-May (spring) 2001 from the LFS.

Education Attainment

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average GCSE point scores, excluding GNVQ Part 1 and GCSE short courses were for each category of school in Northern Ireland in 2003–04. [211637]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Lagan Valley, (Mr. Donaldson) on 19 January 2005 *Official Report*, column 973 W.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes have been assisted under the Warm Homes Scheme in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* North Belfast in each year since its introduction. [211197]

Mr. Spellar: The under-noted table identifies the number of homes assisted under the Warm Homes Scheme since its introduction.

Year of scheme	*Number of homes in Northern Ireland*	*Number of homes in North Belfast*
1. July 2001–31 March 2002	3,146	395
2. Year ending 31 March 2003	7,484	352
3. Year ending 31 March 2004	7,144	483
4. April 2004-	[1]4,648	[2]450

[1] up to end December 2004

[2] up to 25 January 2005

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when funding will be made available for the Fuel Poverty Partnership Fund; and when this Fund will be available to those working to reduce fuel poverty. [211250]

Mr. Spellar: We are currently examining the need for, and exploring options for identifying the resources that can be used to support the Fuel Poverty Partnership Fund. The Inter-Departmental Group on Fuel Poverty, whose first meeting is proposed for April 2005, will determine what resources are required, make decisions on major allocations and if necessary, bid for resources.

Health Trust Costs

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money each health trust in the Province spent on cleaning in the last year. [215369]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report* column 876W.

Heart Failure

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on support offered to heart failure sufferers in the Province. [215376]

Angela Smith: General practitioners, physicians and cardiologists manage patients with heart failure. Dedicated heart failure services have also been developed at a number of acute Trusts.

The Clinical Resource Efficiency Support Team (CREST) recently published guidelines on The Management of Chronic Heart Failure in Northern Ireland. The guidelines focus on the aspects of care most strongly supported by evidence and aim to improve standards of care and equity of provision for patients with this condition.

Illegal Fuel Seizures

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many seizures of illegal fuel there have been in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years; and what quantities of fuel were seized in each instance. [214275]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

Figures related to the value of oils seized are published in HM Customs and Excise's Annual Report and Accounts 2003–2004 (HC119).

The following table shows the numbers of hydrocarbon oils seizures that have taken place in Northern Ireland over the last three years and the total volume of fuel that those seizures account for. It is not possible to provide information on the volume of fuel seized in each individual seizure.

	Number of oils seizures	*Total volume of oils seizures (million litres)*
2001–02	925	1.75
2002–03	478	1.59
2003–04	710	1.52

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been prosecuted as a result of seizures of illegal fuel in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [214276]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

Prosecution is an important sanction in tackling fraud and Customs use it alongside a range of available sanctions, including seizing assets, duty assessments and civil penalties to maximise the enforcement impact.

The number of convictions related to hydrocarbon oils fraud in Northern Ireland during the last three years are set out in the table.

	Number of convictions
2001–02	15
2002–03	3
2003–04	4

Northern Bank Robbery

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action he plans to take in relation to Sinn Fein in response to the chief constable's assessment that the IRA was responsible for the Northern bank robbery. [211970]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Prime Minister, myself and the Irish Government have made it clear in discussions with Sinn Fein that it is now for the IRA to respond and to make clear their commitment to ending all criminal activities. The two Governments have received a report from the Independent Monitoring Commission on recent paramilitary activity. The report will, as usual, be carefully considered and will be published soon.

Positive Steps Programme

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether reconviction rates for young offenders have met the target set by the Positive Steps programme. [213096]

Mr. Pearson: The Positive Steps Programme is currently being evaluated. A report which will address reconviction rates will be published later this year.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has undertaken a cost benefit analysis of the Positive Steps Programme. [213148]

Mr. Pearson: A cost benefit analysis was not carried out at the time of the launch of the programme, however the financial benefits of the programme will be reported by an independent evaluator. A report will be published later this year.

Primary Schools (Coleraine)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the scheme to provide new school buildings at *(a)* Killowen Primary Coleraine and *(b)* Millburn Primary Coleraine are likely to commence. [211519]

Mr. Gardiner: There are no schemes currently in planning for Killowen Primary and Millburn Primary schools. The North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB) has provisionally identified in their 5-year Capital plan, the intention to bring forward to the Department of Education major works schemes proposals for the two schools. The proposals are expected in 2007–08 for Millburn Primary School and 2008–09 for Killowen Primary School.

Religious/Political Discrimination

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of discrimination on the grounds of religious or political belief in Northern Ireland are awaiting resolution through the appeals tribunal system. [214508]

Mr. Gardiner: In Northern Ireland, cases of discrimination on grounds of religious or political belief in employment are matters for the Fair Employment Tribunal. At week ending 4 February 2005, there were 1,028 cases awaiting resolution.

Safeguarding and Child Protection

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what account the Department of Finance and Personnel took of safeguarding and child protection in setting its budget and priorities; and what priority will be given to accreditation arrangements contained in the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 by Government departments in Northern Ireland in the development of departmental business plans. [214823]

Angela Smith: Safeguarding and child protection continue to be a priority for central government. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety will consider accreditation arrangements contained in the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (POCVA) along with other funding requirements in the light of available resources and competing priorities.

School Transport Contracts

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are applied in awarding school transport contracts other than the lowest cost tendered. [214805]

Mr. Gardiner: In addition to the lowest cost criterion, Education and Library Boards' requirements for awarding home to school transport contracts include the following:

Results of a Criminal Record Check;
Driver/Hackney Licence;
Road Service Operator's Licence;
Appropriate DoE plates;
Current Vehicle Test Certificate;
Road Fund Licence;
Vehicle Insurance;
Public Liability Insurance;
Satisfactory past performance; and
Acceptable number or vehicles and drivers available

In addition, contracts may be awarded to satisfy requirements for "continuity of service" from year-to-year in respect of children with special educational needs.

Sinn Fein (USA Visas)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations the Government have made to the US Administration regarding the granting of visa applications to members of Sinn Fein to enter the USA. [213648]

Mr. Paul Murphy: We have regular dialogue with the US Government on the state of the peace process; but decisions on applications for visas are a matter for the US Government.

Social Work Files

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will issue regional guidance on the structure and content of trust family and child care social work file records. [214824]

Angela Smith: The Department has no plans to issue regional guidance on the structure and content of Trusts' family and child care social work records. The Department provides, through the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 and its associated regulations and guidance, a comprehensive framework for case recording purposes. In addition, a range of Standards developed by the Social Services Inspectorate also addresses case recording to ensure that well-structured case files and good recording practices are promoted.

It is important that social workers' professional practice ensures that they record their involvement with children, their parents/carers and the multi-disciplinary team with which they work.

Violent Offenders

Rev. Martin Smyth: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce legislation to bring Northern Ireland arrangements for interagency assessment and management of violent offenders into line with those of England and Wales. [214821]

Mr. Spellar: The first thematic inspection by the Criminal Justice Inspectorate Northern Ireland (CJINI) is a review of the multi-agency procedures for the risk assessment and management of sex offenders in Northern Ireland. Included in the terms of reference for the inspection is an assessment of the potential implications of legislating to place the procedures on a statutory footing and extending them to include violent offenders. I will consider the issue raised by the hon. Gentleman in light of the findings in the Chief Inspector's report, which I understand will shortly to be submitted to the Secretary of State.

Young Offenders

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many and what percentage of participants in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Young Offenders' Centres Positive Steps Programme have completed the programme; and how many have gone through more than one programme. [213097]

Mr. Pearson: 635 Young Offenders have thus far participated in the Northern Ireland Prison Service Young Offenders' Centres Positive Steps Programme. Approximately 84 per cent. have completed the Programme and a further 16 per cent. are in the process of completion. 36 have completed both the Cognitive Behaviour Programme and the Drugs Education Programme. None of the course participants have re-entered the programme.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the reconviction rate for young offenders in Hydebank Wood young offenders centre has been in each year since 2000 for *(a)* all inmates, broken down by remand and sentenced prisoners and *(b)* those inmates participating in Northern Ireland prison service drug programmes. [213098]

Mr. Pearson: Information on the reconviction rate for young offenders at Hydebank Wood, including those who have been attending prison service drugs programmes is not available at present. The Northern Ireland Office is intending to publish a statistical and research bulletin on 22 February 2005 entitled Adult Reconviction in Northern Ireland 2001.

David Burnside: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many inmates at Hydebank Wood young offenders institution are registered drug addicts. [213147]

Mr. Pearson: There is one registered drug addict at Hydebank Wood young offenders institution.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 9 February 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine TB

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB will publish its fourth report; [213287]

(2) when she plans to publish the fourth Independent Scientific Group report on Bovine TB. [213125]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The fourth report of the Independent Scientific Group on Cattle TB is being finalised. Publication is expected in early February.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has conducted on whether species of wildlife other than the badger are a significant reservoir for bovine tuberculosis. [214114]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra-funded research carried out by the Central Science Laboratory, on the risk to cattle from wildlife species other than badgers in areas of high herd breakdown risk, was published on 9 July 2004. Researchers isolated *Mycobacterium bovis* (the prime causative agent for TB in cattle) in a number of mammalian species, some for first time e.g. muntjac deer. Infection was also found in foxes, stoats, polecats, common shrews, yellow-necked mice, wood mice, field voles, grey squirrels, roe deer, red deer and fallow deer. While isolations from deer are a concern, it is not clear what, if any, contribution any of the species examined in the study make to the problem of TB in cattle.

Further research into the role of wild deer in the perpetuation of TB in cattle is planned.

Defra has also funded a study of bovine tuberculosis in small mammals at Oxford University.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether the availability of rapid assay methods for bovine tuberculosis would assist in the detection of infection in badgers. [214118]

Mr. Bradshaw: A rapid assay method for detection of bovine tuberculosis (TB) infection in badgers is not likely to be available for field use in the short term.

The current TB diagnostic test for badgers, the indirect ELISA (enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay) test, is not sufficiently sensitive to provide reliable estimates of TB prevalence in badgers. The sensitivity of the test is 40.7 per cent. and the specificity is 94.3 per cent. when used as a single test.

Defra is funding research into the development of immunological assays for the detection of *Mycobacterium bovis* (*M. bovis*) infection in badgers at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. The project aims to provide Defra with both improved and new diagnostic tools for the identification of *M. bovis* in badgers. Research is due to end in March 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of tuberculosis outbreaks in cattle over the past five years has been attributed by her officials to badger-to-cattle transmission; and what the percentage was in the previous 10 years. [214119]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not possible at present to give a valid estimate. Research designed to inform the Government on the relative importance of cattle and badgers as vectors of the disease is continuing.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the loss of tuberculosis-free status in the UK on *(a)* intra-Community trade, *(b)* trade with Russia and *(c)* trade with the rest of the world in all UK cattle products, including milk and dairy products; [214128]

(2) whether the change in the number of tuberculosis outbreaks continues at the rate experienced over the last five years; and whether she expects the tuberculosis-free status of the national herd to be lost. [214129]

Mr. Bradshaw: The increasing rate in the number of tuberculosis (TB) breakdowns (an average increase of 18 per cent. per annum over the period 1986–2003) will not affect the status of the national herd, because Great Britain, as a whole, does not qualify for officially TB free status according to the criteria set by the EC and the Organisation Internationale des Epizooties. However, individual herds not subjected to TB movement restrictions can be considered Officially TB Free (OTB) for the purposes of international trade in cattle products, including milk and dairy products.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the results of the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland are consistent with results recorded from the study at East Offaly. [214138]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the East Offaly study the evidence of cattle infection was measured by reactor animals per 1,000 tests, whereas the main method in the Four Area Study was the odds of new herd restrictions. There was a marked decline over time in the badger removal areas compared to the reference areas in both studies. By the nature of both studies, however, it is difficult to ascribe this reduction definitely to badger removal.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* meetings and *(b)* communications her Department has had with officials of the Irish Agriculture Ministry concerning the four counties study on bovine tuberculosis in Ireland. [214160]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra officials met with officials from the Department of Agriculture and Food, and scientists, at University College Dublin, in October last year. This meeting preceded the publication of the Irish Four Area Trial results and the discussion was limited to the expected date of publication.

I met with Irish officials on 25 January to discuss the trial results. The Chief Veterinary Officer and officials were also in attendance.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of whether it is possible for farmers to apply biosecurity measures to their cattle herds which are sufficiently stringent to prevent any cattle-to-badger contact. [214165]

Mr. Bradshaw: Complete biosecurity is seldom possible where wildlife is concerned, but farmers are advised to minimise contact between their cattle and wildlife.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Mr. Jack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the carbon dioxide emissions levels of each economic sector in the UK have been in each year since 1997. [211025]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 25 January 2005]:* The following table shows UK carbon dioxide emissions in million tonnes of carbon per year CO_2 emissions by economic sector since 1997, consistent with the most recent published information which is contained in the Consultation Paper published in December 2004 for the Review of the UK Climate Change Programme. We have not yet received a full set of sectoral data for 2003 and we hope to do so shortly and will publish as soon as we can.

Source	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
Energy supply	53.6	55.3	52.6	55.0	58.1	56.8
Business	25.4	25.2	25.3	24.8	25.6	23.7
Industrial processes	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.5	6.1	5.4
Transport	34.9	34.6	34.7	34.6	34.6	34.5
Residential	22.5	23.0	22.9	23.1	24.0	23.6
Public	4.3	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.2
Agriculture	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.5	0.4
Land use change	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.1	3.7
Waste management	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total	153.1	154.4	151.8	152.7	156.8	151.5

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the annual cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in her Department and its agencies, for each year from 1997–98 to 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [211595]

Alun Michael: The cost of enhanced early retirements in Defra and its agencies was £6,109,000 in 2003–04 and £9,400,000 in 2004–05.

The Department did not exist prior to June 2001. Figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Estimates are not yet available for future financial years.

EC Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for the fisheries and aquaculture sector met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214317]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU Committee for the fisheries and aquaculture sector routinely meets in Brussels at one of the Commission's meeting facilities. The dates of the meetings during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies of the EU are as in the following list. Representatives from the UK Fisheries Departments were present at all of these meetings. The exact nature and number of representatives depended on the subjects under discussion, with experts on control and enforcement, fleet policy and statistics being present as necessary.

Italian Presidency

15 July 2003
1 October 2003
20 October 2003
19 November 2003
9 December 2003

Irish Presidency

14 January 2004
11 February 2004
10 March 2004
20 April 2004

Dutch Presidency

6 and 7 July 2004
9 September 2004
13 October 2004
17 November 2004
14 December 2004

European Food Safety Authority

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the activity of the European Food Safety Authority in the UK in the last 12 months; and if she will list the publications and newsletters published by the authority over that period. [215275]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Food Safety Authority has not undertaken any activity in the UK in the last 12 months in the fields of animal health and welfare or plant health. Any activity it may have undertaken in the field of food safety is a matter for the Food Standards Agency.

A list of its publications can be found on its website http://www.efsa.eu.int/.

Farmers Markets

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she plans to take to support the development of farmers markets *(a)* in the North West region and *(b)* elsewhere in England. [213101]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

(a) In the North West region support for the development of farmers markets is being taken forward by the North West Fantastic Food Partnership. This partnership is made up of a group of organisations from across the region whose role is to assist food producers to develop their business and market their products. The partnership is pursuing a five-year project (from November 2002 to March 2007) covering a range of activities including support for farmers markets. Funding for these activities (totalling some £5.3 million) comes from the North West Regional Development Agency, Defra's Rural Enterprise Scheme and from the Merseyside Objective One programme. Specific initiatives relating to farmers' markets include the improvement of existing farmers' markets, the creation of new markets and the promotion of the markets to consumers.

(b) More generally, the Government welcome the establishment of farmers markets. They offer an excellent outlet for farmers to sell their produce direct to consumers and the Department is keen to encourage their development. That is why we have made provision under the England Rural Development Programme for grants to projects promoting farmers markets.

Defra officials met representatives from the National Farmers Retail and Markets Association (FARMA) last July to explore how Defra could work with FARMA on the common goals of reconnecting farmers to their markets and helping them to add value. The meeting included a discussion on FARMA's priorities and how these might be supported under various grant schemes—in particular the Rural Enterprise Scheme (RES) and the Agriculture Development Scheme (ADS). Farmers markets at both regional and national level have received funding under those schemes in the past. The meeting also covered how FARMA could raise its profile with the regional development agencies (RDAs). As a result, representatives from FARMA gave a presentation to Defra's Regional Food Cross-Cutting Group, which includes representatives from the RDAs, the Countryside Agency and the Food Standards Agency, in September 2004.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213637]

Alun Michael: Since Defra was formed in June 2001 the costs of producing the in-house magazine are as follows:

	Number of issues	*Total cost (£) (excl. VAT)*
June 2001 to March 2002	10	186,000
April 2002 to March 2003	12	223,800
April 2003 to March 2004	12	283,200
April 2004 to February 2005	11	259,600

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list her Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of overrun and *(d)* time of overrun. [205780]

Alun Michael: Providing the level of detail the hon. Member has requested would breach the disproportionate cost threshold. However, lists of IT projects undertaken by the Department between 2001–02, 2002–03, 2003 October 2004 (when Defra's IT services were outsourced to IBM) and a separate list of projects undertaken since October 2004 are attached. These lists will be made available in the library of the House.

Lists of IT projects undertaken by the Department for the period June 2001 to July 2003 were made available in response in the answer given on 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 239W. These lists will be made available in the Library of the House.

Livestock Movements (Animal Abuse)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions have been brought by her Department for animal abuse in the course of movement of animals to member states of the European Union. [214371]

Mr. Bradshaw: Prosecution action is usually taken by local authorities as primary enforcement agents for animal welfare in transport rules. Information on the number of prosecutions is published in the annual "Return of Expenditure Incurred and Prosecutions taken under the Animal Health Act 1981, and Incidences of Disease in Imported Animals" which are available in the Library of the House. This information does not distinguish action taken in respect of animals intended for export.

Information on checks carried out by this Department on the welfare of animals for export is made available each month on the Defra website.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the installations within England and Wales where materials contaminated with radioactivity may be incinerated; and what quantities of *(a)* materials and *(b)* radioactivity are involved. [215187]

Mr. Morley: The premises in England and Wales which are authorised under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993 to dispose of radioactive wastes by incineration are listed. Each authorisation includes limits on the quantity of radioactivity that can be incinerated, as this determines the public radiological impact. Copies of the authorisations are placed on the Environment Agency's public registers and are sent to local authorities so that they may be made available for public access. The authorisations generally do not specify the associated quantities of material (in terms of the volume or weight of the waste), and records of those quantities are not collated centrally. Details of releases of radioactivity from authorised premises in England and Wales, including sites where radioactive waste may be incinerated, are published in the Pollution Inventory section of the Environment Agency's website, www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

List of premises in England and Wales which are authorised to incinerate radioactive wastes

Nuclear sites

BNFL Sellafield
BNFL Capenhurst
Hartlepool Power Station
Heysham 1 Power Station
Heysham 2 Power Station
Hinkley Point B Power Station
Sizewell B Power Station
Berkeley Power Station
Bradwell Power Station
Dungeness A Power Station
Oldbury Power Station
Trawsfynydd Power Station
Wylfa Power Station

Non-nuclear premises

Addenbrookes NHS Trust Hospital, Cambridge
Nottingham City Hospital
White Rose Environmental Ltd., Nottingham
University of Nottingham
New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton
White Rose Environmental Ltd., Leeds
Royal Preston Hospital, Preston
Viridor Waste Management Ltd., Derriford Hospital, Plymouth
National Blood Service, Regional Blood Transfusion Centre, Bristol
White Rose Environmental Ltd., Royal Bournemouth Hospital, Bournemouth
Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth
Royal Hospital Haslar, Gosport
Shanks Chemical Services Ltd., Hythe, Southampton
Pfizer Ltd., Sandwich
White Rose Environmental Ltd., Queen Mary's Hospital, Sidcup
White Rose Environmental Ltd., William Harvey Hospital, Ashford
Tesla Engineering Ltd., Pulborough
BFH Incineration Ltd., Hillingdon Hospital, Uxbridge
Queen Mary and Westfield College, London
Merck Sharp and Dohme Ltd., Harlow
Northwick Park Hospital, Harrow
Glaxosmithkline Research and Development Ltd., Harlow
St. Albans City Hospital
University of Westminster, London
Glaxosmithkline Research and Development Ltd., Welwyn
S. Grundon (Waste) Ltd., Slough
Glaxosmithkline Research and Development Ltd., Stevenage
Institute for Animal Health, Woking
Shanks Chemical Services Ltd., Pontypool

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the relationship between the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management and Nirex. [212136]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) is the independent advisory committee set up by UK Government and the devolved Administrations under the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely programme to provide recommendations on the best option, or combination of options, for the long-term management of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste. CoRWM has been asked to deliver its recommendations by July 2006.

Nirex is a company originally set up by the UK nuclear industry in 1982 to provide radioactive waste disposal services to the industry and others. Current work includes: scientific, engineering and social science research into options for dealing with radioactive waste in the long term; specifications and standards for the treatment and packaging of radioactive waste; and compiling the UK Radioactive Waste Inventory in conjunction with Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra).

CoRWM and Nirex are separate and distinct bodies. Nirex will contribute to the CoRWM review as part of its work. Nirex is to be made independent of the nuclear industry and under greater Government control, through a Defra/DTI holding company, from 1 April 2005 for the period of CoRWM's work, following which these arrangements will be reviewed and a decision made on the future.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997; [213666]

(2) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department and its predecessors was in each year since 1997. [213674]

Alun Michael: Defra uses staff surveys to examine staff opinions on a wide range of issues, including working practices, satisfaction and leadership. The results help the Management Board to identify areas of strength (which can be shared with other Government Departments as good practice) and areas for improvement, on which action can be taken.

Since 2004, key measures in the Department's Corporate Balanced Scorecard have been informed by staff survey results. They are also used to measure progress against meeting Defra's Performance Partnership Agreement.

MAFF carried out one census (all staff) survey in 2000. Defra was formed in June 2001 and has since run two census staff surveys and four sample (25 per cent. of staff) surveys.

A breakdown of expenditure on staff surveys since 1997:

April to March:	*Expenditure (£)*
2001–02	0
2002–03	53,920.76
2003–04	14,424.31
2004 to present	44,965.23
Total	113,310.30

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Community Amateur Sports Clubs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on community amateur sports clubs. [214835]

Mr. Caborn: I welcome the fact that over 2,000 Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs) have now registered with the Inland Revenue and received an estimated total of £5 million in tax reliefs as a result of doing so.

Last month my Department published "Growing Community Sport", a leaflet publicising the CASC scheme. I have sent copies to many hon. Members and hope that they will make use of this leaflet to tell their constituents about the benefits available to sports clubs.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210533]

Mr. Caborn: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the speeches her special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210560]

Mr. Caborn: The special advisers at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have not given any speeches during the period between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

Welsh Language Scheme

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether her Department's Welsh language scheme was approved by the Welsh Language Board; and on what date the scheme was implemented. [211328]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS does not have a Welsh Language Scheme approved by the Welsh Language Board. However our good practice policy is to ensure that Welsh versions are available of all reports where DCMS has policy responsibility in Wales.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards

Mr. Sanders: To ask the hon. Member for Roxburgh and Berwickshire, representing the House of Commons Commission, what the cost was in 2003–04 of dealing with complaints to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards which *(a)* did and *(b)* did not lead to the making of a report by the Commissioner; and how many such complaints there were in each case in 2003–04. [214159]

Sir Archy Kirkwood: The Commissioner received 96 specific complaints against a named Member in 2003–04, of which six were the subject of reports to the Committee on Standards and Privileges. A detailed analysis of these figures is given in the Commissioner's Annual Report for the year in question (HC 716, Session 2003–04).

The cost of the Commissioner's office in the same period was £335,258, of which £20,153 can be attributed directly to costs (mainly of transcription) arising from a particular inquiry. It is not possible to attribute the bulk of the office's costs (which relate to staff) to individual complaints.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Witnesses

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Solicitor-General when she expects to have completed her consideration of the representations she has received about the desirability of allowing prosecutors direct access to witnesses in order to assess their credibility. [214591]

The Solicitor-General: The Report setting out the Attorney-General's conclusions on the issue of whether in principle prosecutors should be able to interview witnesses in criminal trials was published on 20 December 2004. Copies were placed in the Libraries of both Houses on that date.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213781]

Ms Hewitt: The total cost of cleaning all the Department's buildings internally and externally is:

Financial year	*£ million*
2001–02	1.00
2002–03	1.04
2003–04	1.10
2004–05	1.12

Costs are not available for years prior to FY 2001–02.

All contracts for cleaning are competitively tendered on a regular basis.

Independent benchmarks show our costs at or below the average for equivalent buildings in London.

Energy Policy

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will set out the *(a)* scope and *(b)* terms of reference of the study on the Effects of the Renewables Obligation on the wood panel industry; when the study was commissioned; and when she expects it to be published. [214852]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The purpose of the study is to establish the current and likely future impact of the Renewables Obligation on the wood panel industry, relative to other factors affecting the commercial position of the industry.

We have not yet commissioned the study but plan to do so shortly.

We expect the study to take several months to complete.

Nuclear Security Conference

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what involvement her Department has had in the *(a)* planning and *(b)* arrangements for the international conference on nuclear security in London on 16 to 18 March; which Ministers and officials in her Department are planning (i) to attend and (ii) to give a presentation at the event; what estimate she has made of the likely cost of hosting the event; and which officials of non-departmental public bodies responsible to her Department are expected to attend. [214248]

Nigel Griffiths: The UK is hosting this international conference on nuclear security on behalf of the IAEA as part of its activities under the G8 Global Partnership during its G8 presidency year. The Department of Trade and Industry has been represented on the programme committee for the conference by an official from the Office of Civil Nuclear Security. In addition, officials from the Energy Group at DTI have been involved in planning the event. FCO conference services have undertaken most of the practical planning elements of the event in liaison with the IAEA's conference services.

I will be hosting a reception on the first evening of the conference, 16 March, and my right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Middle East, Foreign Office will be speaking during the opening session. Senior officials from both DTI and FCO are planning to give presentations at the event. Officials from the DTI's Export Control and Non-proliferation Directorate, Energy Group and Office of Civil Nuclear Security will be attending this conference.

The current estimate of the cost to DTI of holding this event is for between £110,000 and £140,000 depending on the final number of attendees. There will be an additional cost incurred by Government Hospitality for the reception on 16 March.

Premium Phone Numbers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the operators of premium telephone number *(a)* 0906 124 2692 and *(b)* 0906 633 7066 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [213589]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS tell us they have received no complaints from the hon. Member or anyone else about the services operating on either of these numbers. In order for ICSTIS to take appropriate action it would need a clear explanation of the specifics of the complaints and where possible the submission of supporting information, such as promotions and mailings. If there is a serious issue with these numbers it would be quickest for the hon. Member to pass on the complainant's information to ICSTIS direct for it to take appropriate action rather than use a parliamentary question.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will refer the operators of premium telephone number 0906 633 4228 to the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services. [213912]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: ICSTIS was notified on 31 January of calls generated by automated calling equipment directing recipients to call the premium rate number in question. Using its emergency procedure powers ICSTIS shut down the number on 1 February 2005 and is taking further enforcement action against the service provider.

TRANSPORT

A74

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when he will announce the start of work to complete the upgrading of the A74 between Carlisle and Guardsmill; [215533]

(2) if he will make a statement on his plans to upgrade the A74 between Carlisle and Guardsmill. [215534]

Mr. Jamieson: Draft Orders for the scheme were published on 4 February 2005. The current programme shows start of works in 2006–07, with the road opening by 2008. This is subject to funding and satisfactory completion of the necessary statutory procedures.

David Maclean: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* fatalities and *(b)* serious injuries which have occurred on the A74 between Carlisle and Guardsmill in each year since 1996. [215535]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency assesses its routes each year to identify locations where further investigation might be required. Since 1996, the number of incidents resulting in fatalities on the A74 between Carlisle and Guardsmill is slightly above the national average for other similar roads, and the number of incidents resulting in serious injuries is significantly below the average.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who the ministerial design champion for his Department is. [215652]

Mr. McNulty: Tony McNulty MP, Minister of State for Transport.

Drivers' Hours (Exemptions)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 586–87W, on EC legislation, if he will make a statement on the removal of exemptions on drivers' hours; what representations he has received on the subject; what assessment he has made of the consequential financial impact on UK firms; and if he will list the exemptions concerned. [215299]

Mr. Jamieson: The Department carried out an extensive public consultation exercise in 2002 on the European Commission's legislative proposal to replace Council Regulation (EEC) 3820/85 on drivers' hours as part of our consideration of the likely impact of this proposal on UK industry. We received 69 responses, which included contributions from the main road transport associations and trade unions. The consultation did not yield sufficient data to allow an assessment of costs to the UK industry.

The Council adopted a Common Position on this proposal in December 2004. If the Common Position is agreed by the European Parliament, the following categories of vehicle would no longer be exempt: specialised breakdown vehicles operating beyond a 100 km radius from base; vehicles over 7.5 tonnes used for the non-commercial carriage of goods; vehicles not owned or hired in with a driver by (i) the armed services, civil defence, fire services, and forces responsible for maintaining public order, and (ii) public authorities; non-specialised vehicles transporting funfair and circus equipment, vehicles used in connection with gas, electricity, telegraph and telephone services, radio and television broadcasting, and the carriage of postal articles in vehicles over 3.5 tonnes operating beyond a 50 km radius of base and those vehicles over 7.5 tonnes operating within this radius; commercial passenger vehicles suitable for carrying between 10 and 17 people; vehicles carrying live animals to markets; vehicles used as shops at local markets or for door-to-door selling, mobile banking or exhibitions; vehicles used for driving instruction if they are being used for the commercial carriage of goods or passengers; gas and electricity-propelled vehicles operating beyond a 50 km radius of base; and tractors operating beyond a 100 km radius of base.

Heathrow

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what budget has been allocated for Project Heathrow; and how the costs of the working groups will be apportioned between his Department, the airport operator and other parties that are financially involved. [215492]

Charlotte Atkins: Provision of £220,000, £150,000 and £30,000 has been made for the years 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 respectively, mainly for further research and analysis. Parties involved in any working groups meet their own costs, with the exception of consultants working under contract to the Department, and independent technical experts on the air quality panels, whose costs are reimbursed by the Department.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department's policy on an additional full-length runway at Heathrow has changed. [215493]

Charlotte Atkins: No. An additional runway at Heathrow, if supported following the outcome of the current work on further environmental assessment, would be a short runway as indicated in the Air Transport White Paper and the preceding consultation document.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the timescale is for the work being undertaken by each of the planned working groups in Project Heathrow. [215494]

Charlotte Atkins: All the work is being carried forward with a view to being able to reach conclusions towards the end of next year. In the case of any proposals for mixed mode, we have given a commitment to consult and would expect to do so next spring.

Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to reorganise the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. [215843]

Mr. Darling: We have no plans to reorganise the Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Road Accidents (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* pedestrians, *(b)* cyclists, *(c)* drivers and *(d)* car occupants have been (i) injured and (ii) killed in each Greater London borough in each of the last six years for which figures are available. [214572]

Mr. Jamieson: A table giving the information requested for the years 1998 to 2003—which is the latest year for which data is available—has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 when special advisers attended meetings with external representatives at which Ministers were not present. [210548]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

All meetings held by special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Stonehenge (Road Projects)

Mr. Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the current estimated cost is of *(a)* the Countess roundabout flyover project, on the A303(T), *(b)* the A303(T) Stonehenge tunnel and Winterbourne Stoke bypass and *(c)* the A303(T) Chicklade bypass; and if he will make a statement. [214211]

Mr. Jamieson: The current approved budget for the A303 Stonehenge project which includes the Countess roundabout flyover, a 2.1 km bored tunnel past Stonehenge and a bypass to the village of Winterbourne Stoke, is £223 million.

The A303 Chicklade Bottom to Mere improvement has not entered the Highway Agency's Targeted Programme of Improvements. The scheme, which includes a bypass of Chicklade, would cost in the order of £120 million (at 2001 prices).

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Iraq

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made in the reconstruction of schools in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [214661]

Hilary Benn: A number of donors are assisting in school reconstruction and rehabilitation projects in Iraq. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is undertaking a countrywide programme which has so far rehabilitated over 2,400 schools. United Nations agencies are also carrying out school rehabilitation projects in Baghdad and southern Iraq. The World Bank has agreed an emergency school construction and rehabilitation project to finance the rehabilitation of about 140 schools and the construction of new buildings for about 110 schools which currently have unsafe or overcrowded facilities. The UN and World Bank projects are being financed through the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, to which DFID has contributed £70 million. The UN and the World Bank are also assisting with the provision of essential educational supplies, including textbooks and furniture.

PRIME MINISTER

Russia

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met President Putin; and what matters were discussed. [214663]

The Prime Minister: I last met President Putin at the G8 Summit in Georgia on 10 June 2004. We discussed a wide range of international and bilateral issues, including Iraq, the Middle East peace process, Afghanistan and the Kyoto Protocol.

Ukraine

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Prime Minister of Ukraine and *(b)* other EU members regarding EU membership of Ukraine. [214662]

The Prime Minister: I have had no discussions with the Prime Minister of Ukraine on EU membership.

The UK is working with EU partners to develop a programme of enhanced co-operation with Ukraine, responding to the priorities set out by President Yushchenko. The General Affairs and External Relations Council on 31 January welcomed President Yushchenko's intentions, stating that "commitment to reform opens the way to a strengthening of relations between the EU and Ukraine".

DEFENCE

China Arms Embargo

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the implications of ending the EU-China Arms embargo for *(a)* future UK defence technological capabilities and *(b)* interoperability with US forces. [211394]

Mr. Ingram: The Government have discussed with the United States Administration the background to the EU's deliberations on the embargo on arms exports to China.

We have emphasised that any decision to lift the embargo would be made only in the context of a continuing commitment by member states strictly to control the export of defence-related items to China. This is consistent with the view of the European Council meeting in December 2004 that the result of any decision to lift the embargo should not be an increase in arms exports to China in either quantitative or qualitative terms.

Cut and Sew Contract

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the outcome of his Department's visit to China in connection with the cut and sew contract. [214548]

Mr. Ingram: Ministry of Defence personnel visited sub-contractors in China at the request of and accompanying the prime contractor. This was to assure the Ministry of Defence that finished garments will be supplied to specification and on time.

The visit team also confirmed that there was no cause for concern about the standards that sub-contractors employed. The prime contractor understands its responsibility to manage sub-contractors and ensures a minimum age of employees. The prime contractor also showed that it monitors ethical standards, and environmental considerations.

Under the terms of the contract I cannot comment on sub-contractor details specifically, but I can inform my hon. Friend that evidence was shown that employees were paid more than the minimum wage stipulated by Chinese government legislation. There was also evidence that sub-contractors were maintaining a good and loyal staff, and enjoyed a low labour turnover.

Future Carrier Programme

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what involvement the Royal Navy has in defining the requirements for the CVFs; and what arrangements are in place to ensure a continuing Royal Navy input into the programme. [214222]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy is engaged at all levels of the future carrier (CVF) programme. The programme is overseen at senior level by the Carrier Strike Programme Board, on which the Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff sits.

Defence Clothing and Textile Agency

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on current suppliers of clothing at the Defence Clothing and Textile Agency, Bicester. [214013]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Clothing and Textiles Agency (DCTA) was disestablished in October 2000. Its clothing procurement function was subsumed into the Defence Clothing Integrated Project Team (DC IPT) which was established on 1 April 2001 and is based at Caversfield, near Bicester.

The DC IPT has a wide range of suppliers from small companies to larger Prime Contractors who supply operational clothing, personal protection equipment, parade and ceremonial wear and physical and adventurous training equipment.

As part of the Defence Logistics Organisation's procurement reform strategy, DC IPT has been moving towards letting larger term contracts with Prime Contractors for inventory items that have been grouped together in Product Groups, a process known as supplier base optimisation. Contracts for the supply of Tape Seam Garments, Footwear, and Cut and Sewn Products have been let, together with a number of smaller contracts for Ceremonial Headwear and Physical and Adventurous Training equipment which have followed the same principles.

Such methods of contracting are delivering increasing value for money and also enable the more efficient use of resources, while maintaining the quality standards demanded by the Ministry of Defence.

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for financial years *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 the Warship Support Agency spent in Scotland (i) in monetary terms and (ii) as a percentage of the total personnel budget; and if he will make a statement. [215430]

Mr. Ingram: The Warship Support Agency (WSA) incurred expenditure on personnel as follows:

£

	Financial year	
	2002–03	*2003–04*
WSA total personnel spend	297,249,000	280,796,000
WSA personnel spend for Scotland	80,042,000	63,798,000
Percentage of total WSA personnel spend	27	23

The personnel spend in Scotland reduced in 2003–04 primarily as a result of the transfer of staff from HMNB Clyde to Babcock Naval Services in September 2002, when partnering arrangements were introduced by the WSA under the Warship Support Modernisation Initiative.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213620]

Mr. Caplin: The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Diego Garcia

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at what time, using Greenwich Mean Time, and on what date the United States Navy authorities on Diego Garcia informed *(a)* British military personnel based on Diego Garcia and *(b)* his Department that the hydro-acoustic monitoring stations based on Diego Garcia had picked up the movement and direction of the tsunami tidal wave on 26 December 2004; and what action was taken following the receipt of this information. [208790]

Mr. Ingram: United Kingdom military personnel were not warned of the earthquake or tsunami by the Naval Support Facility on Diego Garcia, but became aware of both from reports on the Internet at about 13:00 local time (07:00 GMT)—around five hours after the earthquake struck. The Commanding Officer contacted the Ministry of Defence to confirm that Diego Garcia was broadly untouched by the tsunami. MOD duty staffs in the UK also became aware of the tsunami via the broadcast media and began discussions with DfID staff about scoping the scale of the disaster at around midday on Boxing day.

Harrier Jets

Mr. John Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where Harrier jets returning from Afghanistan will be serviced and repaired. [214392]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Cottesmore.

Iraq

Mr. Soames: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from his US counterpart regarding the length of deployment of the multinational forces in Iraq. [214014]

Mr. Ingram: The Secretary of State for Defence discusses progress in establishing a free, stable and democratic Iraq, and the role of the multinational force in Iraq in securing that objective, on a regular basis with his US counterpart, Mr. Rumsfeld. The Secretary of State has made it very clear in these discussions that UK armed forces will remain in Iraq for as long as there is a requirement for them to do so.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has made to the US Administration concerning *(a)* the number of and *(b)* assistance provided to Iraqi civilians travelling on boats sunk in the Euphrates river during military action by coalition forces in Fallujah. [214509]

Mr. Hoon: None.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* children under 18 years are in British custody in Iraq. [215394]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* As at 2 February 2005, there are 30 internees being held in the only British Military Detention Facility in Iraq, none of whom are women and none of whom state they are under 18.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which regiments came into contact with members of the United States 800th Military Police brigade during their deployment in Iraq; and on what dates and at what locations in each case. [215482]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* The United States 800th Military Police brigade has subordinate elements consisting of some 25 units, none of them currently based in the British area of responsibility. Until early 2004, a unit from 800th Brigade was based at Camp Bucca, which is a US camp within MND(SE). It would have been necessary for members of British units regularly to liaise with the US units based at Camp Bucca. It is not possible after this time to give a list of the British regiments, dates and locations in each case.

Major George O'Kane

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether Major George O'Kane was reporting to a British military lawyer based at Coalition headquarters in Iraq, as stated in the Official Report of the Australian Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on 31 May 2004. [210352]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* Yes.

MOD Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many police officers there were in the Ministry of Defence police force in each year since 1994; and what projections there are for numbers of officers in the force in future years. [214290]

Mr. Caplin: The following table shows the number of police officers (full-time equivalents) within the Ministry of Defence police in each year since 1994, as at 1 April, and the latest available figure.

	Number
1994	4,750
1995	4,570
1996	4,060
1997	3,860
1998	3,730
1999	3,610
2000	3,540
2001	3,420
2002	3,300
2003	3,320
2004	3,400
January 2005	3,380

The Ministry of Defence police does not produce projections for the number of police officers, so no forecast figures are available.

Postal Packet Service (Iraq)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will reinstate the free postal packet service to the Iraq theatre of operations. [214845]

Mr. Ingram: In respect of the free postal packet scheme to Iraq which ceased on 8 April 2004, there are no plans to permanently reinstate this service. I refer the hon. Member to my written ministerial statement of 27 February 2004, *Official Report*, column 70WS, and subsequent answers of 5 March 2004, *Official Report*, column 1155W, to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock), 1 April 2004, *Official Report*, column 1605W, to the hon. Member for Mid-Norfolk (Mr. Simpson), 5 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1527W, to the hon. Member for Uxbridge (Mr. Randall), 15 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 811W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Burnley (Mr. Pike), 1 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 713W and 4 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1882W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Batley and Spen (Mr. Wood) and 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 244W to my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew).

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his estimate is of the number of Christmas parcels sent to British servicemen in Iraq which have not been delivered. [215384]

Mr. Ingram: I assume that my hon. Friend refers to packets posted under the free mail service arrangements in place from 17 November until 15 December last year. All items received by the British Forces Post Office under that scheme have been delivered into theatre.

Regimental Names

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the rank was of the officers of the Army Board who took the decision on the new name for the Queen's Lancashire Regiment, the King's Own Borderers Regiment and the King's Regiment. [214356]

Mr. Ingram: The Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB) comprises military officers ranging in rank from Major General to General, and the Second Permanent Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Defence. Its recommendations on all aspects of the Future Infantry Structure were forwarded to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence by the Chief of the General Staff.

Supply Chain Initiative

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a decision on the rationalisation programme as part of the Future Defence Supply Chain Initiative; when he expects to make an announcement on that decision; and if he will make a statement. [214611]

Mr. Ingram: A decision on the Future Defence Supply Chain Initiative will be made at the end of the current Assessment Phase, based on four competitive Best and Final Offers received in December 2004. Proposals for the Future Defence Supply Chain from both in-house and industry teams are currently being examined and the findings will form the basis of a Main Gate decision, and announcement, in due course. It is not appropriate to make a statement at this stage in the assessment process.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to rationalise DLO Donnington as part of the Future Defence Supply Chain Initiative. [214612]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence received four competitive proposals for the Future Defence Supply Chain on 22 December; two in-house, and two from industry consortia. MOD is currently assessing the proposals and it is too early in that analysis to conclude the impacts for Donnington, or other locations in the Defence Logistics Organisation.

Swan Hunter Contract

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 81W, on Swan Hunter, on what date the decision was taken to award Swan Hunter an £84 million contract amendment; on what date Swan Hunter were notified of the additional money; whether any unsuccessful bidder bid within 20 per cent. of the original contract price agreed with Swan Hunter; and if he will make a statement. [213565]

Mr. Ingram: The approval process for the revised Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) programme costs was completed on 8 December 2004 and Swan Hunter were notified formally the following day.

One unsuccessful bidder from the original contract award was within 20 per cent. of the original contract price agreed with Swan Hunter.

Terrorist Threat

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of terrorist threats to the UK and security threats coming from sovereign states with standing armies; when this assessment was last *(a)* reviewed and *(b)* changed; and if he will make a statement. [214379]

Mr. Ingram: The Government published the White Paper "Delivering Security in a Changing World" (CM6041) in December 2003. This set out the policy baseline and assessment of risks against which the Ministry of Defence currently plans to carry out its aim to deliver security for the people of the United Kingdom and the Overseas Territories by defending them, including against terrorism, and by acting to strengthen international peace and security.

The Ministry of Defence and other departments continually monitor changes in security circumstances around the world. The assessment of the threat of terrorist attacks in the United Kingdom is the responsibility of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre, which draws on the expertise of a range of departments and agencies including the Ministry of Defence.

Trident

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment his Department has made of the cost to his Department in each year since 1993 of modifications to the shore-based target planning system for Trident; when the last modification took place; what its cost was; and if he will make a statement on the functions of these modifications. [214241]

Mr. Hoon: Modifications to the shore-based target planning system for Trident have cost an average of £250,000 per year (at current prices) since 1993. The last major modification took place in Financial Year 2001–02 and cost around £584,000. The purpose of the modifications has been to update hardware and operating system software in accordance with good industry practice.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the running costs of the Trident programme have been since it came into service; what the running costs of the Trident programme are in this financial year; what the total lifetime running costs of the Trident programme are expected to be at the end of its service period; and if he will make a statement. [214374]

Mr. Hoon: The combined capital and running costs of Trident, since it was declared operational in 1994, has ranged between 2 and 4 per cent. of the annual defence budget. The total cost of Trident for the current financial year is not yet available. Based on current planning assumptions the costs for its remaining period in service are expected to be between 2 and 4 per cent. of the expected annual defence budget.

HOME DEPARTMENT

2 Marsham Street

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff will be housed at the new Home Office buildings in 2 Marsham street; and to which agencies each of the staff belongs. [205341]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Private Finance Initiative contract (PFI) for the construction and operation of the new Home Office Headquarters provided for a building occupancy of 3,450 workstations. It is expected that when the building is fully occupied in April 2005, close to this number will be accommodated. The building is designed to be flexible and the numbers occupying will depend on operational factors including the Department's continuous programme of moving posts to the front line. Further staff will be moved in as these changes occur. There are no current plans to accommodate staff from any of the Home Office executive agencies.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which body has responsibility for the furnishings of the new Home Office buildings in 2 Marsham street. [205347]

Fiona Mactaggart: Annes Gate Property plc as part of the 29-year Private Finance Initiative contract.

Antisocial Behaviour Measures

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list all the antisocial behaviour measures introduced by his Department since 1997; and if he will give the total figures for take-up for each measure to date by *(a)* basic command unit and *(b)* local authority area. [214265]

Ms Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOS) were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Police Reform Act 2002 and the Criminal Justice Act 2003 extended the legislation to allow additional agencies to apply for ASBOs and introduced two new types of ASBO: orders on conviction and interim orders.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 put in place a range of measures to tackle antisocial behaviour and gave local agencies the tools they need to tackle antisocial behaviour on the ground. Key measures in the Act include:

Powers to close premises where drugs are used unlawfully

Powers enabling social landlords to take action against anti-social tenants

A package of support and sanctions to enable parents to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour among children

Powers to allow police officers to disperse groups of people who are causing nuisance or intimidating others

Powers for environmental health officers to close noisy premises

Powers to tackle graffiti and fly-posting.

The Housing Act 2004, introduced by ODPM, also contained important measures to enable landlords to tackle antisocial behaviour.

Data on the take-up of antisocial behaviour measures is not available in the form requested. However, a one-off snapshot survey of the uptake of antisocial behaviour powers was carried out in September 2004 and published in October 2004 in the "Together" One-Year On report. This survey of antisocial behaviour co-ordinators in Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships provided an estimate of use of powers over a 12-month period. The results of the survey, based on responses from 239 antisocial behaviour co-ordinators, found that:

158 crack house closure orders were made between January and September 2004

418 dispersal orders were made between January and September 2004

824 parenting contracts and orders were made between October 2003 and September 2004

5,383 acceptable behaviour contracts were made between October 2003 and September 2004.

Data showing the number of ASBOs issued by all courts, broken down by local authority area, is shown in the table which has been placed in the Library. We do not collect data on ASBOs by basic command unit.

Asylum Seekers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 17 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 739W, on asylum seekers, if he will list the special and specific grants given to each local authority in Wales to cover the costs of asylum seekers' support in each year since 1996–97; and when information on payments in Wales for *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 will be available. [211168]

Mr. Browne: The Asylum Support (Interim Provisions) Regulations 1999, as amended, provide local authorities with the power to support adults and families whose applications for asylum were made prior to the revised system of support administered by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) coming into force in their area. Under this grant local authorities can claim their direct costs of providing support—accommodation and financial assistance—to asylum seekers. The grant is subject to unit cost limits and is calculated on an individual local authority's audited expenditure in 2001–02 uplifted for inflation.

The Home Office also pays grant to local authorities exercising their statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 in respect of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASCs). Under this grant, which is subject to unit cost limits, local authorities can claim their direct costs of providing support to UASCs.

Local authorities who are unable to live within their grant limit can seek additional payments under the arrangements for special payments. No local authorities in Wales have made special circumstances requests since 1999–2000, suggesting that authorities are able to meet the costs of providing support to asylum seekers from their grant.

It is expected that the grant payments to Wales for 2003–04 and 2004–05 will be published at the end of March 2005. These payments will, however, be subject to audit.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department show much central Government grant has been paid to local authorities in *(a)* each Government Office region, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Northern Ireland to cover the cost of asylum seeker support in each year since 1996–97. [211920]

Mr. Browne: The information is not available in the precise format requested. The Home Office assumed responsibility for the support of adult and family asylum seekers on 1 April 1999. Responsibility for the budget for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children did not transfer to the Home Office until 1 April 2000. Available information for the years 1999–2000 to 2001–02 is in the table and will be placed in the Library.

For Scotland NASS paid the Scottish Executive, who were responsible for reimbursing local authorities. Payments to Northern Ireland were made to the Department for Health, Social Services and Public Safety. That Department is responsible for reimbursing to local authorities their costs of supporting asylum seekers.

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers resident in Loughborough are in receipt of hard case payments; and if he will make a statement. [213915]

Mr. Browne: As at 4 February 2005 there were no failed asylum seekers in receipt of support under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 (hard case support) in Loughborough.

Care Home Staff Checks

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to reduce the cost of Criminal Records Bureau checks for new staff in nursing and residential homes. [213994]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* There are no plans to reduce the cost of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for new staff in nursing and residential homes.

However, the CRB will continue to look at ways to improve efficiencies to improve the speed and reduce the overall cost of the disclosure service without compromising the quality and accuracy of their service.

Carter Report

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department has taken to implement the recommendations of the Carter Report. [213550]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office has made significant progress in implementing Lord Carter's recommendations. The National Offender Management Service became operational on 1 April 2004 with Martin Narey as Chief Executive. A National Offender Manager and 10 Regional Offender Managers are now in place. Together they are taking forward work on developing contestability and helping Boards to develop offender management in their areas, drawing on what we have already learnt from the offender management pilots in the North West. A redesign of NOMS headquarters, to reflect these changes, will be in place by 1 April 2005.

The Management of Offenders and Sentencing Bill which was published on 13 January will underpin the creation of a National Offender Management Service as proposed by Lord Carter and establish sentence planning and review as a core offender management function. The Bill will also implement key Carter proposals to rebalance sentencing by making provision for a 'day fines' scheme, reinforcing rigorous and effective community punishments and by targeting resources on the most serious, dangerous and persistent offenders.

Community Support Officers

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many community support officers are working in *(a)* Warrington and *(b)* Warrington, North. [214972]

Ms Blears: The available data on the deployment of Community Support Officers (CSOs) within Cheshire police is for Basic Command Units rather than parliamentary constituencies. I am told by the Chief Constable of Cheshire (Mr. Peter Fahy QPM) that the No. 3 Division (Warrington) currently has 14 CSOs.

I announced on 24 November that, under the first phase of the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, the Home Office will support the recruitment of an additional 13 CSOs in Cheshire. This will enable the force to deploy a total of 69 CSOs in Cheshire by 31 March 2005.

Control Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland in relation to the introduction and operation in Northern Ireland of control orders as announced by the Home Secretary on 26 January; and if he will make a statement. [212035]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have had no direct discussions with the Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland on this issue. However, my officials have had discussions with the Association of Chief Police Officers of England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and will continue to liaise closely, through official channels, with the police forces in all three jurisdictions and other relevant stakeholders on the detail of the policy and in preparation for the necessary legislation to come into force.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether homeless people subject to house arrest without trial under his proposals for the detention of terrorists will receive help in finding accommodation for their detention; [213466]

(2) what plans he has for housing terrorist suspects who are homeless at the time of arrest under his proposals for detention without trial; whether it is his policy to press for priority to be given to such people on waiting lists for council accommodation; and what assessment he has made of the suitability of bed-and-breakfast accommodation for such people. [213467]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is not anticipated that the imposition of a control order on an individual (where this is deemed necessary and appropriate) would interfere with access to any benefits (including housing benefit) to which he or she might normally be entitled.

The conditions imposed in any control order will be tailored on a case by case basis to the threat posed by the individual.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 4 January 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton, with regard to Miss Calnette Dele-Charley. [215102]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I wrote to my right hon. Friend on 3 February 2005.

Doormen

Mr. Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether doormen who have passed their examinations but have not yet received their certification may work as such; [213879]

(2) what the average time has been between doormen being trained and passing their examinations and receiving their certification. [213880]

Ms Blears: It is an offence for an individual to work as a door supervisor prior to being licensed as such by the Security Industry Authority once it is a legal requirement to be licensed in their region.

Independent awarding bodies have a contractual obligation to process an assessment within 10 working days from the time an individual sits the exam and has provided all necessary identification and supporting documentation. This assessment provides the applicant with the appropriate reference number with which to make a licence application to the SIA. The SIA aim to process accepted applications within six weeks.

European Public Bodies

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215231]

Fiona Mactaggart: The European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) is based in Vienna and its prime objective is to produce objective, comparable and reliable data at European level on racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism.

It produces regular reports on these issues, including an annual report, which are published on its website at www.eumc.eu.int Its reports cover the whole European Union, customarily including sections relating to each of the member states, including the United Kingdom.

It collects its data on each member state through a contract with a "national focal point" based in each member state. The national focal point for the UK is the Commission for Racial Equality.

Departmental Staff

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff are employed by the Home Office and each of its agencies *(a)* in London and *(b)* in each location outside London. [205344]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of staff employed by the Home Office and it agencies in London and in the regions is set out in the following table:

Department	*London*	*Rest of South East*	*South West*	*West Midlands*	*North West*	*North East*	*Yorkshire and Humberside*
Home Office main (excluding agencies)	11,500	1,880	160	380	2,030	180	1,450
Criminal Records Bureau	0	0	0	0	340	0	0
Forensic Science Service	730	0	0	800	0	230	270
United Kingdom Passport Agency	570	0	0	0	340	420	0
Assets Recovery Agency	60	0	0	0	0	0	0
Charity Commission	150	0	180	0	210	0	0
HM Prison Service	6,200	7,190	3,640	4,920	5,480	3,580	5,020
Grand total Home Office	19,210	9,070	3,980	6,100	8,400	4,410	6,740

Department	*East Midlands*	*Eastern*	*Wales*	*Scotland*	*Northern Ireland*	*Unreported and elsewhere*	*All areas*
Home Office main (excluding agencies)	120	630	90	220	10	130	18,780
Criminal Records Bureau	0	0	0	0	0	0	340
Forensic Science Service	0	230	190	0	0	0	2,450
United Kingdom Passport Agency	470	0	296	240	120	2	2,450
Assets Recovery Agency	0	0	0	0	21	0	90
Charity Commission	0	0	1	0	0	0	540
HM Prison Service	4,170	4,230	860	0	0	0	45,290
Grand total Home Office	4,760	5,090	1,440	460	150	130	69,940

Homelessness

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to introduce, to help homeless people who are addicted to (i) alcohol and (ii) drugs. [206589]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to her on Wednesday 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1030W.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library copies of the work conducted by Consult Hyperion Ltd. on *(a)* the biometric technology roadmap for person identification within UK policing and *(b)* the Facial Images National Database. [214935]

Mr. Browne: Amtec Consulting Group has been contracted to update the 'Identification Roadmap' document.

Copies of the updated paper titled "Identification Roadmap", subtitled "Biometrics Technology Roadmap for Person Identification within the Police Service" prepared by the Police Information Technology Organisation together with Amtec Consulting Group, will be placed in the Library.

With regards to the Facial Images National Database I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 896W.

The Facial Images National Database paper was produced by the Police Information Technology Organisation. Amtec Consulting Group was not involved.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether *(a)* biometric passports and *(b)* identity cards will contain (i) radio frequency identification chips and (ii) contactless integrated circuits. [214994]

Mr. Browne: The biometric passport will contain a radio frequency contactless integrated circuit that conforms to ISO 14443 in accordance with ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) recommendations on biometric travel documents. It will be a close proximity-type chip that can only work within 0–2 cm of a reader.

No decision has yet been made on whether the ID Card will contain a chip capable of being read through a contactless interface. Work is progressing on developing the technical, interoperability, security and business requirements which influence this decision.

Legal Proceedings (Costs)

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average total cost, including all staff, legal, court and other process costs, of securing *(a)* an antisocial behaviour order, *(b)* an injunction and *(c)* an eviction was in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [213527]

Ms Blears *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* We do not hold data on the information requested. We hold data on the average cost to the applicant authority of obtaining an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO). The Campbell Review, published in 2002, provides the latest data on the cost of obtaining an ASBO. It quoted an average cost of £4,800 for an ASBO but this figure was based on a small sample of orders in the early period of their introduction and was skewed by one abnormally complicated and unrepresentative expensive application. Practitioners advise that applications usually cost much less than this and that costs decrease with experience of using the orders. New research, due to be published shortly, shows that costs have reduced significantly since the Campbell Review.

Injunctions are civil orders taken out by landlords or local authorities. We do not hold information on the average cost of an injunction or eviction.

Missing Children

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were reported to the police as missing from home in each of the last three years, broken down by *(a)* age and *(b)* gender. [213766]

Ms Blears: This information is not collated centrally. The Police National Missing Person Bureau (PNMPB) collates data from police forces on missing persons who have been missing for more than 14 days. Statistics are not produced at a national level. A review into the PNMPB is due to report by the end of February 2005 and we will inform ministers of its findings.

People Trafficking

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Albanian nationals Taulant Merdany and Elidon Bregu, sentenced at Sheffield Crown court for the trafficking of women into the United Kingdom for the purposes of prostitution, will be deported from the United Kingdom on the completion of their prison sentences; and if he will make a statement. [208387]

Mr. Browne: In sentencing Taulant Merdany and Elidon Bregu to terms of imprisonment, the judge recommended that they should be deported at the end of their sentences. The Secretary of State will consider whether deportation remains appropriate on completion of those sentences. When deciding whether or not to deport a person on their release from prison, the nature and seriousness of the offence will be among the factors taken into account.

A deportation order will not normally be revoked earlier than three years after its enforcement. However, the length of time that a deportation order should remain in force after removal will depend on the individual case. For those convicted of serious offences this may be 10 years or more.

The offence of trafficking into the UK for sexual exploitation is covered by section 57 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and carries a maximum penalty following conviction on indictment of 14 years' imprisonment.

Police Officers (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the future role and strength of special constables in Lancashire. [215465]

Ms Blears: The deployment of special constables within Lancashire is a matter for the Chief Officer.

The recent White Paper, "Building Communities, Beating Crime" sets out the Government's vision for continued improvements in policing and the future role of the special constabulary in delivering neighbourhood policing.

Special constables will help to reduce crime and the fear of crime and tackle antisocial behaviour by focusing on intelligence-led, high visibility patrolling and local crime reduction initiatives.

The Government remain committed to increasing the numbers of special constables throughout England and Wales. Accordingly, we have been working with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), Forces and other stakeholders on a variety of measures aimed at improving specials' recruitment, retention, management and deployment. These include the production of good practice guidance and the provision of Capacity Building Funding of up to £70,000 per Force (second year funding of £70,000 has just been approved for Lancashire) for staff and/or initiatives dedicated to the special constabulary.

Police/Crime Statistics (Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued in North Durham since their introduction. [214464]

Ms Blears: Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. From commencement, up to 30 June 2004 (latest available), the Home Office has been notified of five ASBOs issued where restrictions have been imposed in Chester-le-Street district council area, and 12 where restrictions have been imposed in Derwentside district council area (parts of which make up the North Durham constituency),

Data up to 30 September 2004 will be available shortly.

Prison Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the change in capital charges payable by the Prison Service has been following the revaluation of the estate; [208801]

(2) if he will list the prison estate assets and their value *(a)* before and *(b)* after the latest revaluation; [208803]

(3) what sum was identified to be rolled over from the 2003–04 financial year's underspend in the Prison Service, as at 1 April 2004. [208804]

Paul Goggins: The total capital charges (that is the cost of capital and depreciation) for Her Majesty's Prison Service are forecast to increase by £39.974 million in 2004–05 compared to the amount actually incurred in 2003–04.
These are detailed in the following table.

		£ million
Capital charges	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Buildings	165.235	174.981
Other equipment	3.427	2.579
Working capital	-4.059	2.495
Total cost of capital charges	164.603	180.055
Depreciation:		
Buildings	106.066	135.384
Other equipment	12.825	8.029
Total depreciation	118.891	143.413
Total capital charges	283.494	323.468

[1] Forecast

The change in value of the Prison Service assets following the revaluation is set out in the following table:

					£ million
	Land	*Buildings*	*Assets under construction*	*Equipment*	*Total fixed assets*
Asset value prior to revaluation as at 31 March 2004	793.665	3,819.829	206.646	77.651	4,897.791
Revaluation 31 March 2004	120.253	332.147	0.000	0.182	452.582
Asset value after revaluation as at 1 April 2004	913.918	4,151.976	206.646	77.833	5,350.373

Further details can be obtained from Note 6 on page 70 of the 2003–04 Prison Service Annual Report and Accounts as laid before Parliament and available in the Library.

The underspends against the budget delegated to Her Majesty's Prison Service for 2003–04 totalled:

	£ million
Resource	40.3
Capital	72.9

These amounts were available to be carried forward as end-year flexibility in the Home Office departmental settlement.

Security Industry Authority

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the average time taken by the Security Industry Authority to process licensing applications is; [214645]

(2) how many door supervisors have applied to the Security Industry Authority for a licence in the Thames Valley police area; how many have been approved; and how many rejected. [214646]

Ms Blears: The average time taken from 1 March 2004 to date to process an application is 6.9 weeks.

1,090 applications forms have been requested from the Thames Valley police force area. Of these, 246 have been returned and accepted as complete. 104 licences have been issued so far, and six applications refused.

Sentencing Policy

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's targets are for numbers of residential rehabilitation places in each of the next three years. [213353]

Miss Melanie Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has not set targets for the numbers of residential rehabilitation places in each of the next three years.

The National Treatment Agency has conducted a needs assessment for tier 4 services, which includes residential rehabilitation; this will be reporting later this year. The findings of this assessment will be used to inform future service development.

Stop Forms

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he next expects to meet representatives of police forces to discuss the implementation of stop forms. [214832]

Ms Blears: I meet police representatives regularly when progress on the introduction of 'stops' recording requirement is reported to the Lawrence Steering Group. Police representatives also sit on the Stop and Search Action Team (SSAT) Delivery Board that oversees the introduction of this measure.

Torture-obtained Information

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has used information obtained by the use of torture by another country since May 1997. [211635]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs gave to the hon. Member for Buckingham (Mr. Bercow) on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 413W.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime contribution, in terms of development of knowledge and policies, to the reduction of cultivation and consumption of narcotic drugs; and if he will make a statement. [214485]

Mr. Rammell: I have been asked to reply.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has played a significant role in the development of international policies aimed at tackling the cultivation and consumption of illicit drugs. In particular, UNODC's research and analysis has helped to increase public knowledge and understanding of illicit drugs issues.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what requirements in *(a)* class size and *(b)* pupil-teacher ratios apply to academy schools. [208012]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Statutory requirements regarding class sizes and pupil-teacher ratios apply only to children up to the age of seven in maintained schools. As independent state schools, academies with pupils of this age (for example all-age academies) are free to take their own decisions on class size and pupil-teacher ratio.

Civil Servants (Retirement)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in her Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [211648]

Derek Twigg: The cost of releases to my Department in the financial years 1997–98 to 2003–04 were:

Financial year	*Total cost to DfES (£ million)*
1997–98	5.145
1998–99	2.73
1999–2000	4.237
2000–01	4.06
2001–02	6.142
2002–03	5.57
2003–04	2.54

The estimated cost of releases in the financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06 are:

Financial year	*Total cost to DfES (£ million)*
2004–05	17.5
2005–06	11.6

There are no current plans for any further early releases beyond 2005–06.

Departmental Policies (Burnley)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214699]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The Burnley constituency lies within Lancashire local education authority. The most recent Key Stage 2 and GCSE and equivalents achievement for pupils attending schools in Burnley are given in the following tables:

Key Stage 2 achievements of 11-year-old pupils attending schools in the Burnley constituency

	Percentage of pupils gaining level 4 and above		
	1997	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Burnley			
English[1]	59	76	17
Maths[1]	59	72	13
National average			
English[2]	63	78	15
Maths[2]	61	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Burnley constituency.

[2] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

GCSE and equivalents[1] achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Burnley constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining:	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Burnley			
5 plus A*-C	40.0	43.6	3.6
5 plus A*-G	84.8	91.1	6.3
1 plus A*-G	90.1	95.6	5.5
National average			
5 plus A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
5 plus A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
1 plus A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offer comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and cover five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including literacy and numeracy at age 11, literacy and numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, pupils with special educational needs, school initiatives, school work force, school funding and resources, children's social services, early years, class sizes, post-16, higher education and adult education.

Additional information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In Your Area' web site will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about adult education, school funding, school initiatives, school performance, school work force and post-16.

Disruptive Pupils

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what initiatives the Government are proposing to urge schools to collaborate on tackling disruption by pupils. [214603]

Derek Twigg: On 1 February my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to Chief Education Officers announcing that she expected that by September 2007 all secondary schools would be part of a local group of schools working together to manage pupil behaviour. To support this approach she asked that each local authority should hold discussions with its school funding forum about the adequacy of local out-of-class and out-of-school provision for persistently disruptive pupils. Officials in the Department for Education and Skills will be monitoring local authorities on these developments.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what role parents of disruptive children are expected to play in individual plans for behaviour support. [214604]

Derek Twigg: Supportive parents are vitally important in achieving and maintaining good behaviour in schools. We want parents to be prepared to support the behaviour policy in their child's school, and to take responsibility for their child's behaviour.

A Pastoral Support Programme is an option schools may use to help pupils to improve their behaviour. Parents of disruptive pupils are involved in the setting up and operation of individual Pastoral Support Programmes for those pupils. The teacher responsible for arranging the programme will discuss with the parents and an LEA representative the causes of concern and what is required of the pupil to put the situation right. Parents should be informed regularly about their child's progress. In some cases, a managed move to another school may be appropriate and parental agreement would be required for this.

When a pupil is reintegrated back into school following a fixed period exclusion, the parents will normally be invited to a reintegration meeting; this provides an opportunity to discuss how best the pupil can return to school and any behavioural problems can be addressed. Where a pupil has been permanently excluded, LEAs should involve parents at an early stage in making arrangements for continuing the child's education and in discussions about alternative school places. LEAs may, through a parenting contract, offer additional help to parents in this situation such as a resource room or parenting skills training.

For some parents, managing their children's behaviour is not easy, and there is help available to help parents do this more effectively. We are encouraging schools and local authorities to engage more with parents, especially at an early stage, in guiding them towards these sources of help when their children persistently misbehave in school, using the parenting contracts that we have introduced as a framework for such agreements. Where parents are unwilling to engage then it is right that we take action to ensure that they do—through parenting orders administered by the courts.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what new plans there are to cater for pupils who are excluded from schools. [214605]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to Chief Education Officers on 1 February announcing that she expected all secondary schools to be part of a group of schools managing pupil behaviour by September 2007. By that date she expects such groups to have agreed admission protocols in place for previously excluded pupils. She also asked that local authorities should hold discussions with their school funding forums about the adequacy of provision for persistently disruptive pupils, including those who have been excluded from school. This will entail a discussion of how much funding should be retained by the LEA and how much should be devolved to schools. Devolution of funds for behaviour support and out-of-school provision to groups of secondary schools should help improve the quality of alternative provision. Officials in the Department will be monitoring progress on these new arrangements.

Capital Costs (Essex)

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the capital cost of new school building and extension, repair and renovation of school buildings was in *(a)* the County of Essex in each year from 1991 to 1997 and *(b)* the County of Essex and the boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea in each year from 1998 to 2004. [215117]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Capital allocations to the County of Essex and the boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea, for the years in which information is held centrally, are set out in the following table. Information on how the allocations were spent is not held centrally as this is decided by local authorities in accordance with their asset management plans.

£000

	Essex	*Thurrock*	*Southend-on-Sea*
1996–97	12,186	—	—
1997–98	11,477	—	—
1998–99	15,510	2,099	2,577
1999–00	21,928	3,395	1,356
2000–01	57,317	6,464	7,032
2001–02	41,570	5,899	6,631
2002–03	84,492	6,176	7,314
2003–04	63,462	11,007	9,907
2004–05	63,202	13,289	13,793

Education Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase central funding to schools in Lancashire. [215467]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Lancashire has benefited from the significant increases in funding that this Government have committed to education. In 2005–06 all schools will see an increase in their School Formula Spending Share, which includes an element of central funding, of at least 5.5 per cent. per pupil. Lancashire's increase is significantly higher at 7.0 per cent. per pupil.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on construction and maintenance of school *(a)* playing fields and *(b)* sports halls in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley since 1997; and how much has been spent in each school in Chorley. [215381]

Derek Twigg: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on *(a)* science blocks and *(b)* classrooms in (i) Lancashire and (ii) Chorley since 1997; and how much has been spent in each school in Chorley. [215382]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Information on money spent on science blocks, class rooms and individual schools is not held centrally. Decisions on how money is invested in schools are set out in local authorities' asset management plans, recorded locally.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much revenue funding was spent per pupil in Warrington in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [214969]

Derek Twigg: The information requested is contained within the following table:

£

Combined LEA and school based expenditure [1],[2] per pupil[3]—Cash terms		
	LEA name[4]	*Combined LEA and school based expenditure per pupil*
1997–98[5]	Pre-LGR Cheshire	2,560
2003–04	Warrington	3,450

[1] The combined LEA and school based expenditure includes all expenditure on the education of children in LEA maintained establishments and pupils educated by the LEA other than in maintained establishments. This includes both school based expenditure and all elements of central LEA expenditure except youth and community and capital expenditure from revenue (CERA).

[2] 1997–96 financial data are taken from (pre local government reorganisation) Cheshire LEA's Revenue Outturn spending return submitted to the ODPM. 2003–04 financial data are taken from Warrington LEA's Section 52 Outturn Statement (Table A) submitted to the Department for Education and Skills. 2003–04 is as reported by the LEA and is subject to change

[3] Pupil figures include all pre-primary pupils, including those under 5s funded by the LEA and being educated in private settings, pupils educated in maintained mainstream schools and other LEA maintained pupils. The pupil data for pupils attending maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools are taken from the DfES Annual Schools Census. Private voluntary and independent (PVI) under 5 pupil numbers are taken from the Early Years census but are only included in the 2003–04 pupil count. Other LEA maintained pupils include all pupils attending schools not maintained by the Authority for whom the Authority is paying full tuition fees, or educated otherwise than in schools and pupil referral units under arrangements made by the Authority drawn from the Form 8b submitted to the DfES. Also inducted as other LEA maintained pupils are all pupils attending pupil referral units who are not registered at a maintained mainstream school drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census. All pupil numbers are adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[4] Local government reorganisation (LGR) took place on the 1 April 1998 where pre-LGR Cheshire LEA was split into Cheshire LEA Halton LEA and Warrington LEA. As a result, the 1997–98 data is for pre-LGR Cheshire LEA and the 2003–04 data is for Warrington LEA These two sets of figures are not comparable as Halton and Cheshire LEAs have higher unit cost

than Warrington LEA which has the effect of inflating the 1997–98 unit cost. In 1998–99 (the first year a breakdown is available) the unit cost was £2,700 in Cheshire, £2,730 in Halton and £2,310 in Warrington.

[5] Spending in 1997–96 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest £10 as reported by the LEA at 7 February 2005.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total amount spent on capital projects in Warrington schools has been in each year since 1997. [214970]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The following table shows capital resources allocated to Warrington local education authority and its schools since 1998, when central records commenced. Decisions on how allocations, and other funds available locally, are spent on schools are taken by the local education authority in accordance with locally prepared asset management plans.

Warrington local education authority

	Allocation (£000)
1998–99	3,673
1999–2000	4,687
2000–01	8,711
2001–02	9,009
2002–03	10,016
2003–04	8,821
2004–05	8,006
2005–06	9,805

Exclusions (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils have been permanently excluded from schools in *(a)* the West Derbyshire parliamentary constituency and *(b)* the county of Derbyshire in each year since 1997. [211936]

Derek Twigg: The available information is given in the table.

Exclusions data for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are known to have been under-reported by some schools in England. The Department carried out a checking exercise, but this was at LEA level only. As a result, this information is not available at parliamentary constituency level for the three most recent years.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1, 2]: Number and percentage of permanently excluded pupils

	West Derbyshire parliamentary constituency		*Derbyshire LEA*	
	Number	*Percentage*[3]	*Number*	*Percentage*[3]
1997–98	6	0.04	131	0.12
1998–99	4	0.03	97	0.08
1999–2000	6	0.04	91	0.08
2000–01	n/a	n/a	130	0.11
2001–02	n/a	n/a	141	0.12
2002–03	n/a	n/a	125	0.11

n/a = Not available.

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.

Source:

Annual Schools Census

Illiteracy

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of adults in London she estimates were illiterate in each of the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by local education authority. [214570]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: "The Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills" (DfES, October 2003) provides the latest estimates of literacy levels for England and London in particular. While it is not possible to provide estimates for each of the last five years, the survey does show literacy levels in individual London education authorities. These figures are detailed in Table 1.

The survey highlights that 5 per cent. of London respondents were classified at Entry Level 1, 2 per cent. at Entry Level 2 and 12 per cent. at Entry Level 3 for literacy (Entry level 3 or below compares to below GCSE grade G). The Entry Level 3 or below figure for England as a whole is 16 per cent. or 5.2 million people. A further 34 per cent. of respondents were at Level 1 (considered equivalent to GCSE grades D-G).

The survey maps skill levels to the National Standards for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. A copy of the survey report is on the DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk

Table 1: Literacy levels across London drawn from the Skills for Life Survey

Literacy	*Total entry level*		*Level 1 skills*		*Level 2 skills*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Barking and Dagenham	19,340	19	47,690	47	33,800	34
Barnet	20,670	10	83,250	41	99,720	49
Bexley	8,695	6	71,530	52	57,550	42
Brent	34,400	19	62,360	35	82,950	46
Bromley	20,500	11	60,000	32	105,500	57
Camden	9,210	7	47,490	35	78,960	58
City of London	215	4	1,560	30	3,495	66
Croydon	27,500	13	96,410	45	90,290	42
Ealing	26,980	13	86,730	42	91,420	45
Enfield	26,500	15	75,510	43	74,310	42
Greenwich	22,390	16	61,070	44	54,950	40
Hackney	24,520	18	46,430	34	64,410	48
Hammersmith and Fulham	7,515	6	43,100	36	68,440	57
Haringey	26,620	18	49,230	33	73,470	49

Table 1: Literacy levels across London drawn from the Skills for Life Survey

Literacy	*Total entry level*		*Level 1 skills*		*Level 2 skills*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Harrow	17,440	13	53,390	40	63,680	47
Havering	12,730	9	61,330	44	65,670	47
Hillingdon	22,870	15	55,600	36	76,080	49
Hounslow	21,400	15	58,430	41	63,380	44
Islington	9,395	8	48,720	40	64,290	53
Kensington and Chelsea	5,620	5	34,920	31	71,580	64
Kingston upon Thames	8,940	9	31,320	32	57,090	59
Lambeth	22,200	12	70,250	37	95,940	51
Lewisham	25,440	15	60,160	36	81,900	49
Merton	11,870	9	51,700	41	63,190	50
Newham	59,900	38	44,170	28	53,330	34
Redbridge	23,750	16	63,720	42	65,550	43
Richmond upon Thames	8,990	8	31,210	27	74,420	65
Southwark	30,740	19	57,010	35	77,500	47
Sutton	14,100	12	39,350	34	61,880	54
Tower Hamlets	24,240	18	48,300	37	58,680	45
Waltham Forest	22,690	16	66,510	46	55,920	39
Wandsworth	10,860	6	58,730	31	118,000	63
Westminster	12,290	10	41,060	32	75,440	59
LONDON	925,975	19	1,640,600	34	2,204,970	46

Source:
DfES, 2003.

Baseline Assessment

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidelines she has issued to infant schools on baseline assessment; and if she will make a statement. [214851]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* Schools are not required to make a baseline assessment. The Foundation Stage Profile replaced baseline assessment in 2003. It is the statutory instrument for assessing children at the end of Reception Year against progress towards the Early Learning Goals within the Foundation Stage Curriculum. The Foundation Stage Profile Handbook gives practitioners guidance on completing the assessment. The QCA Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 Assessment and Reporting Arrangements give guidance to schools on meeting the statutory requirements.

Support for practitioners in carrying out the Profile judgments is provided by LEA Early Years Advisers and Primary National Strategy consultants.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what baseline assessment the Government uses to evaluate school and student improvement at the end of Key Stage One. [214850]

Mr. Stephen Twigg *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* The Government does not use a baseline assessment to evaluate school or pupil improvement at the end of Key Stage One. Instead, we use teacher assessment supported by National Curriculum tests and tasks.

Literacy and Numeracy (North Durham)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the levels of literacy and numeracy among school-age children in North Durham were in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* the latest period for which figures are available. [214189]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data requested is set out in the following tables:

Key Stage 2—percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 plus

	1997	*2001*	*2004*	*Percentage point increase 1997–2004*
English				
Durham North Constituency[1]	64	74	80	16
Durham LEA[2]	62	75	77	15
National[3]	63	75	78	15
Mathematics				
Durham North Constituency[1]	67	75	77	10
Durham LEA[2]	65	74	76	11
National[3]	61	71	74	13

[1] Pupils attending schools in Durham North constituency.

[2] The average for all maintained schools in the local education authority. This includes the results of small primary schools listed in the School and College Achievement and Attainment tables and the results of special schools.

[3] The average for all schools in England (including independent schools).

Key Stage 3—percentage of pupils achieving Level 5 plus

	1997	*2001*	*2003*[1]	*Percentage point increase 1997–2003*
English				
Durham North Constituency[2]	57	65	66	9
Durham LEA[3]	52	64	66	14
National[4]	57	65	69	12
Mathematics				
Durham North Constituency[2]	58	65	67	9
Durham LEA[3]	54	64	69	15
National[4]	60	66	71	11

[1] 2003 is the latest year for which constituency level data is available at Key Stage 3.

[2] Pupils attending schools in Durham North constituency.

[3] The average for all maintained schools in the local education authority including special schools

[4] The average for all schools in England including independent schools. Participation by independent schools is voluntary and therefore these figures include data only from those independent schools who choose to make a return.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's "In Your Area" website available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including Literacy and Numeracy at age 11, Literacy and Numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, Pupils with Special Educational Needs, School Initiatives, School Workforce, School Funding and Resources, Children's Social Services, Early Years, Class Sizes, Post-16, Higher Education and Adult Education.

Ministerial Engagements/Visits

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the ministerial engagements *(a)* out of London and *(b)* in London that she has cancelled since her appointment. [209224]

Derek Twigg: According to records four ministerial engagements have been cancelled by the Secretary of State since 1 January, these are listed:

5 January—Foreign and Commonwealth Office Leadership Conference

19 January—Unilever Reception

27 January—Visit to Natural History Museum

1 February—Visit to University College London

Where the Secretary of State has not been able to fulfil other engagements an alternative Minister has attended or the engagement has been rearranged for a later date.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what ministerial visits are planned for each Minister in her Department in the next six months; and if she will make a statement. [207302]

Derek Twigg: The following tables show the ministerial visits for six months from January 2005. These visits are subject to change due to parliamentary commitments and final confirmation.

Secretary of State

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	No visits
February 2005	
1	Montgomery High School, Blackpool

Minister of State for Schools

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
1	Wellgrove Education Centre, Whetstone
6	West Hatch High School, Essex
11	Lillian Bayliss Technology School, Kennington
12	Oaklands School, London
12	Hallfield Junior School, London
18	Marlborough Education Unit, London
18	Bredinghurst School, London
February 2005	
16	Joseph Rowntree Foundation, London
March 2005	
1	Hanham High School, Bristol
2	Saints Peter and Paul R.C. Primary School, London
15	Peckham Academy, London

Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
10	Kate Greenaway School, London
11	Roehampton Neighbourhood Nursery, Roehampton
11	Battersea Sure Start, London
13	Stanlow Abbey Children's Centre, Ellesmere Port
13	Neston Sure Start Unit, Wiltshire
13	Grove Street Community Playgroup, New Ferry
13	Arrowe Hill School, Woodchurch, Wirral
13	'on track' Children's Fund, Wirral
21	Tom Hood School, Waltham Forest
February 2005	
02	Millfields School Breakfast Club, London
02	Early Years Centre Stockingford, Nuneaton
08	Southwark Teens & Tots Project, London
10	Langford Primary After School Club, London
March 2005	
08	Castlecombe Primary School, Mottingham
09	Sure Start Unit, Bedford
09	Arndale Nursery, Luton
15	Community Care Facility, Warrington
22	Sure Start Unit, Bexhill
22	Sure Start Unit, Sidley
April/May 2005	No visits planned
June 2005	
21	Bideford Sure Start, Devon

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
11	University of Teesside, Middlesbrough
12	Prior Pursglove College, Guisborough
12	Scarborough Sixth Form College
12	Yorkshire Coast College
17	Thames Valley University, Ealing
18	University of East London
18	College of North East London
26	Tamar Valley Consortium, Plymouth
26	Combined Universities, Cornwall
26	Cornwall College, Camborne
27	Bridgwater College, Somerset
27	S & B Training Centre, Bedminster
February 2005	
9	Lewisham College, Deptford
9	Laban Art and Drama Institute, Lewisham
10	Manchester University
11	Sheffield University
16	China
March 2005	
3	Wygeston College, Leicester
3	Leicester College

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education

Date	*Venue*
3	New College, Leicester
8	Chichester College
10	Copland Building at the Cavendish Campus, Westminster
17	Northern Ireland

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Schools

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
12	St. Thomas Primary School, Warrington
13	Cherries Learning Centre, Bournemouth
February 2005	
8	Grey Court School, Richmond
22	Tollgate Primary School, London
March 2005	
23	Daily Mail Schools' Day, Twickenham

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
21	Royal School for the Deaf, Manchester
21	Pro-Contact Child Protection Centre, Manchester
28	Hatfield Young Offenders Institute, North Doncaster
28	Child Protection Centre, Sheffield
February 2005	
4	North Beckton Primary School, London
8	Childline Offices, London
28	Arbour Vale Specialist School, Slough
March 2005	No visits planned
April 2005	
15	Families' House, Norwich
26	Voluntary Resource Centre, London
May 2005	
4	Parentline Plus, London
June 2005	No visits planned

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills and Vocational Education

Date	*Venue*
January 2005	
5	British Darts Organisation, Surrey
February 2005	
9	Chichester College
9	Bury College
March/April 2005	No visits planned
May 2005	
26	Helsinki

Mobile Phones

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to distribute Government guidance on the use of mobile phones in schools. [214623]

Derek Twigg: My Department publicised the original report of the Independent Expert Group on Mobile Phones (IEGMP) in 2000 through the Teachernet website. The Department of Health leaflet 'Mobile Phones and Health' is also included on the same site, which focuses on the paragraphs relating to children and young people under 16. I shall consider what, if anything, we could do once the Department of Health has responded to the recent report.

Literacy and Numeracy (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of 11-year-old pupils in London reached Level 4 in *(a)* mathematics and *(b)* English in each of the last seven years, broken down by local education authority. [214571]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Salt Consumption

Mr. Kevin Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether support is provided in schools to young people with *(a)* diabetes and *(b)* kidney-related illnesses to educate them about the dangers of over-consumption of salt; [214179]

(2) what initiatives are being undertaken in schools to raise awareness of the dangers of over-consumption of salt by young people. [214181]

Derek Twigg: The joint Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health guidance 'Supporting pupils with medical needs' helps schools put in place effective management systems to support individual pupils, including those with diabetes and kidney-related conditions.

The National Healthy Schools programme is promoting clear and consistent messages about diet, nutrition, food safety and hygiene, food preparation and cooking, as well as where food comes from, throughout all aspects of school life. This includes teaching pupils about the need for a moderate consumption of sugar, fat and salt.

The Food Standards Agency launched the 'Sid the Slug' programme last September to raise awareness of the dangers of high salt intake, including a campaign pack that over 800 schools have so far applied for.

School Budgets (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school budgets in Greater London, were in deficit in each of the last seven years, broken down by local education authority. [214642]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is available from 1999–2000 onwards. Prior to this school level data was not collected by my Department. Data from 1999–2000 onwards are contained within the following table:

Number of schools in Greater London with deficit budgets[1, 2] *(1999–2000 to 2003–04)*[3, 4, 5]

LEA name	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Greater London	297	220	240	300	293
Barking and Dagenham	14	4	6	13	19
Barnet	5	[illegible]	7	5	6
Bexley	10	5	8	5	5
Brent	10	10	14	16	17
Bromley	13	11	4	14	26
Camden	4	0	2	6	5
City of London	0	0	0	0	0
Croydon	7	2	2	7	14
Ealing	7	4	4	5	4
Enfield	5	5	4	5	4
Greenwich	23	13	18	18	12
Hackney	21	15	17	12	11
Hammersmith and Fulham	3	2	3	5	9
Haringey	28	19	18	11	10
Harrow	1	1	0	1	1
Havering	5	6	4	5	6
Hillingdon	8	11	12	8	7
Hounslow	9	6	6	13	10
Islington	10	3	2	7	9
Kensington and Chelsea	4	1	3	2	2
Kingston upon Thames	3	3	3	3	3
Lambeth	19	5	7	13	12
Lewisham	9	9	11	14	12
Merton	4	3	4	2	6
Newham	14	17	18	20	14
Redbridge	6	4	4	8	10
Richmond upon Thames	3	2	2	6	3
Southwark	10	9	11	22	0
Sutton	1	2	2	2	1
Tower Hamlets	16	13	22	26	22
Waltham Forest	10	7	8	9	17
Wandsworth	6	5	4	7	10
Westminster	9	15	10	10	6

[1] Financial data used to determine budget is taken to the nearest pound.

[2] Due to changes in data items recorded on Section 52, school level balance data is now reported as the combination of any unspent allocations (including unspent Standards Fund grants) and the cumulative balance of income less expenditure from revenue funding sources during the financial year and any balances carried forward from previous years. Previously unspent allocations were excluded from the calculation of school balances but from 2003–04 onwards we are not able to split these out and as a result these figures for 1999–2000 to 2002–03 may differ from figures released previously by the department.

[3] School level data has only been collected by the DfES since the inception of Section 52 in 1999–2000.

[4] Figures for 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are for LEA maintained primary, secondary and special schools. 2003–04 figures also include those LEA maintained nursery schools with delegated budgets.

[5] 2003–04 data is still undergoing data cleaning and is therefore subject to charges by the LEA which may after the results for that period.

Note:

As reported by LEAs as at 3 February 2005.

School Toilets (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money her Department has granted to schools in Lancashire for construction of school toilets in each of the last five years. [215380]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: We do not hold central information on money granted to schools for construction of school toilets. Decisions on how resources should be invested in schools are taken by individual local education authorities based on locally prepared asset management plans.

School Transport (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have used home-to-school transport in Greater London in each of the last five years, broken down by local education authority. [214561]

Derek Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries.

Secondary Schools

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the performance of secondary schools in Ilford, North based on Key Stage 2 to GCSE results since 1997. [214951]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Standards in secondary schools in the Ilford, North constituency have improved significantly. Between 1997 and 2003 the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 increased by 8.4 percentage points in English, 8.4 percentage points in mathematics and 10.4 percentage points in science. School level Key Stage 3 information for 2004 is not yet available. At Key Stage 4 there has been an increase of 14.1 percentage points in the attainment of five plus A*-C GCSEs, which is above the national rate of improvement of 8.6 percentage points. A summary of the improving outcomes is set out in the following table, though it does not include Key Stage 2—age 15 value added scores, which were published for the first time in 2004 and have not yet been developed at constituency level.

Information about education and skills by constituency is made available by the Department through the 'In Your Area' website, available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea.

Key Stage 3: Percentage of pupils at level 5 and above

	English	*Maths*	*Science*
1997	66	67	61.3
1998	67.6	65.2	55.5
1999	63	66.8	54.9
2000	69.1	67	60.9
2001	70	72.2	67.8
2002	72.4	71.4	72.3
2003	74.4	75.4	71.7

Key Stage 4

	Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining 5 plus GCSEs at A-C*
1997	48.5
1998	53.7
1999	56.5
2000	57.2
2001	59.8
2002	58.6
2003	59.9
2004	62.6

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on secondary education in Chorley constituency. [215468]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above at Key Stage 3 in Chorley constituency schools increased by 14.5 percentage points in English, by 9.5 percentage points in mathematics and by 8.1 percentage points in science. School level Key Stage 3 information for 2004 is not yet available. At Key Stage 4 there has been an increase of 7.2 percentage points in the attainment of 5 A*-C GCSEs between 1997 and 2004, which compares to a national rate of improvement of 8.6 percentage points. A summary of secondary outcomes is set out in the following table.

Information about education and skills by constituency is made available by the Department through the 'In Your Area' website, available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea.

Key Stage 3

	Percentage of pupils at Level 5 and above *English*	*Maths*	*Science*
1997	66.6	67	68.2
1998	72.2	70.7	66.1
1999	64.1	69.4	63.4
2000	71.6	73.1	69.2
2001	71.5	74.6	76.4
2002	72.3	75.3	74.2
2003	81.1	76.5	76.3

Key Stage 4

	Percentage 15-year-olds gaining 5+ GCSEs at A-C*
1997	53.7
1998	51.4
1999	52.1
2000	56.7
2001	53.8
2002	57.4
2003	60.9
2004	60.9

Staff Numbers (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* learning support assistants and pupils there are in (i) primary and (ii) secondary schools in (A) Lancashire and (B) Chorley. [215469]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The data for the full-time equivalent number of teachers is given in the following table:

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: full-time equivalent number of teaching staff[2]—January 2004

	Qualified teachers	*Other teaching staff*	*Total teaching staff*
Primary			
Chorley parliamentary constituency	390	0	390
Lancashire local education authority	[3]4,600	30	4,630
Secondary			
Chorley parliamentary constituency	450	10	460
Lancashire local education authority	[3]4,720	70	4,790

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

[3] Source: DfES 618G survey.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census unless otherwise stated.

The data for the full-time equivalent number of support staff is given in the following table:

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: full-time equivalent number of support staff[2]—January 2004

	Teaching assistants	*All other support staff*	*Total support staff*
Primary			
Chorley parliamentary constituency	190	70	260
Lancashire local education authority	2,220	780	3,000
Secondary			
Chorley parliamentary constituency	50	100	150
Lancashire local education authority	470	1,140	1,610

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual Schools' Census

The data for the number of pupils is given in the following table:

Maintained primary and secondary schools [1]: number (headcount) of pupils [2]—January 2004

	Primary	*Secondary*
Chorley parliamentary constituency	8,820	7,720
Lancashire local education authority	96,880	76,690

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.

[2] Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213800]

Derek Twigg: This information is not collected centrally. Costs that are incurred by individual divisions or teams reflect the Department's serious commitment to learning and development for its staff, and support departmental aims and objectives.

School Performance (Stockton, South)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes there have been in *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level results achieved by students in the constituency of Stockton, South since 1997. [215306]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: The information requested is given in the following tables.

Table 1: GCSE and equivalents[1] Achievement of 15-year-old pupils[2] attending schools in the Stockton, South constituency

Percentage of 15-year-olds gaining:	*1997*	*2004*	*Percentage point improvement 1997–2004*
Stockton south—5 + A*-C	42.9	51.8	8.9
Stockton south—5 + A*-G	88.1	91.0	2.9
Stockton south—1 + A*-G	93.0	96.1	3.1
National average—5 + A*-C	45.1	53.7	8.6
National average—5 + A*-G	87.0	88.8	1.8
National average—1 + A*-G	92.3	95.9	3.6

[1] For 2004 only results incorporate GCSEs, GNVQs and a wide range of other qualifications approved pre-16. Prior to 2004 results are based on GCSEs and GNVQs only.

[2] As standard the results reported relate to pupils aged 15 at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August, and therefore reaching the end of compulsory education at the end of the school year.

Table 2: A Level and vocational equivalent achievement in Stockton south—Average point score per candidate[1]

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002[2]*	*2003[2]*	*2004[2]*
Stockton south	15.7	16.5	15.8	16.6	17.1	221.9	248.6	247.7
Stockton-on-Tees LEA	16.0	16.8	16.2	16.9	17.2	229.8	264.5	255.2
National	16.1	15.8	16.3	16.7	17.4	254.7	258.9	269.2

[1] For Stockton, South constituency and Stockton-on-Tees LEA the tables show aggregated results for maintained schools and FE sector colleges only; independent schools are not included. The national figures additionally include independent schools.

[2] A new point scoring tariff was adopted by UCAS in 2002.

Table 3: Average point score per examination entry[1]

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002[2]*	*2003[2]*	*2004[2]*
Stockton south	5.1	5.5	5.4	5.6	5.7	73.6	75.7	76.8
Stockton-on-Tees LEA	5.1	5.9	5.4	5.6	5.6	73.2	77.1	76.4
National	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	76.0	77.4	78.7

[1] For Stockton, South constituency and Stockton-on-Tees LEA the tables show aggregated results for maintained schools and FE sector colleges only; independent schools are not included. The National figures additionally include independent schools.

[2] A new point scoring tariff was adopted by UCAS in 2002.

Further information by constituency, is provided within the Department's 'In Your Area' web site available at http://www.dfes.gov.uk/inyourarea. Where information is not available at the constituency level it has been provided at local education authority level.

This website allows users to access key facts and local information about education and skills based on postcodes. The data available within the site offers comparisons between 1997 and the latest available year and covers five geographies. These are parliamentary constituency, ward, local authority district, local education authority, Government Office Region. England figures are also provided.

The information available within the website is grouped in a number of broad categories including literacy and numeracy at age 11, literacy and numeracy at age 14, GCSE/GNVQ results, pupils with special educational needs, school initiatives, school workforce, school funding and resources, children's social services, early years, class sizes, post-16, higher education and adult education.

Additional information could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, my Department is investigating ways in which we can disseminate more information about the effects of our policies at a local level. The 'In your area' web site will be further developed over the coming months to include additional information about adult education, school funding, school initiatives, school performance, school workforce and post-16.

Unallocated Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if she will make a statement. [213259]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance his Department provides to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [214401]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office works in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in partnership with the Department for International Development (DFID) and Ministry of Defence.

Our Ambassador in Kinshasa is a key member of the support committee for the Transitional Government (CIAT), which offers advice, mediation and facilitation to the Transitional Government.

The UK's financial assistance to the DRC (mainly through DFID) is expected to total £34 million in 2004–05. Additionally, the UK contributes 7.4 per cent. of the UN Peacekeeping Force (MONUC)'s budget and made a further contribution of £1 million in 2004. The UK currently has five military officers serving in MONUC.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since [illegible]97. [213622]

Mr. MacShane: There are three departmental canteens and two bars on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Home Estate. The cost of providing catering to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was:

	£
1996–97	160,258.31
1997–98	210,696
1998–99	132,604.30
1999–2000	99,275.00
2000–01	200,434
2001–02	173,958.39
2002–03	119,581
2003–04	184,201.59
2004–05	175,791

A breakdown by (i) running, (ii) staffing, (iii) supply costs of each in each year could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213639]

Mr. Straw: The production costs for centrally funded in-house magazines with a circulation of over 1,000 from 1997 to the last full financial year are as follows:

Financial year	£
1997–98	19,870
1998–99	20,150
1999–2000	21,066
2000–01	22,609
2001–02	86,330
2002–03	97,968
2003–04	131,734

Figures for spending on smaller circulation in-house publications since 1997 are not centrally held and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has two principal all staff in-house magazines: "News&Views" and "Connect". They each have a circulation of 16,000. There are also magazines produced for Consular and FCO Services staff which have a circulation of over 1,000 and where budgets are held centrally. These figures are included in the totals. There are other in-house magazines at Posts and in Directorates, but these figures could not be produced without incurring disproportionate cost as budgets are not held centrally.

The rise in spending between 2000 and 2001 is due to "News&Views" magazine ceasing to be produced solely in-house and being contracted out to a professional corporate communications agency, and to the introduction of a quarterly policy-focused publication for managers: "Connect". Figures for 2003–04 include the contracting out of the editorial function on "News&Views". This has now been brought back in-house and the two magazines are being combined so costs for 2004–05 will fall.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [2138[illegible]]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has, since January 2001 spent £4,000 per annum on the provision of car parking spaces at Albert Embankment for staff at our UKvisas Department. Other parking spaces provided are either free of charge or do not incur separately identified charges.

Details of parking tickets and penalties incurred by official vehicles are only available for the last three years, and are as follows:

	Parking tickets	*Total cost (£)*
2002	18	800
2003	39	2,145
2004	38	1,950

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213839]

Mr. MacShane: From 23 March 2003 to 22 January 2005 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Services fleet of vehicles has spent £34,868.33 on congestion charges and £4,530.00 on penalties. The total spend over this period for charges plus penalties is £39,398.33.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213847]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office spent £1,345,639.51 on stationery in financial year 2004–05. This was made up as follows:

	£
	Cost
Desktop stationery	573,794.80
Computer consumables	338,146.38
Magnetic media	251,171.00
Paper	182,526.36

The information requested for stationery in the six years prior to 2004–05 and for office supplies (other than stationery) for each year since 1997 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Diplomatic Immunity

Donald Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions since 1 May 1997 the Government has waived the immunity of British diplomats or members of their families; what the circumstances of the waiver were in each case; how many requests from foreign Governments for waivers were turned down in the same period; and what the circumstances of each refusal were. [213364]

Mr. Alexander: We regularly waive the immunity of British diplomats to enable them to give evidence in civil or criminal matters. Details are not held centrally and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

We have no record of any requests from foreign Governments for the waiver of diplomatic immunity from criminal jurisdiction of British diplomats or their families during the period in question.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Association Committees with the countries of central and eastern Europe met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214301]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EC-Romania) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214302]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Bulgaria) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214303]

Mr. MacShane: EU Association Committee meetings take place once a year for each candidate country until it joins the EU. Representatives from member states are invited to attend as observers.

The following EU Association Committee meetings took place under the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidencies:

Italian Presidency:

July 2003—Slovenia (in Llubljana), attended by a representative from United Kingdom Permanent Representation to the EU (UKRep).
July 2003—Slovakia (in Bratislava), attended by a representative from the British Embassy, Bratislava.

September 2003—Poland (in Warsaw), attended by a representative from UKRep.

November 2003—Romania (in Bucharest), attended by representatives from UKRep and the British Embassy, Bucharest.

Irish Presidency:

June 2004—Bulgaria (in Sofia), attended by representatives from UKRep and the British Embassy, Sofia.

Dutch Presidency:

November 2004—Romania (in Brussels), attended by representatives from DEFRA and DTI.

The Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) for Bulgaria met in October 2004 in Russe (Bulgaria). The JCC for Romania met in November 2004 in Brussels. Individual member states were not formally represented.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Andorra) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214735]

Mr. MacShane: The EC-Andorra Joint Committee meets on an ad hoc basis. During the Italian Presidency of 2003, one meeting was held on 8 October at the Andorran Representation in Brussels and no UK Government expert was present. None were held in 2004.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the EC-Armenia Co-operation

Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214736]

Mr. MacShane: There was one meeting of the EU-Armenia Co-operation Committee during this period—on 4 June 2004 in Brussels. As Co-operation Committees are chaired by the Commission, with support from the Presidency, there was no UK representative at this meeting. However, the UK participated fully in formulating the EU's position for the meeting.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the EC-Kazakhstan Co-operation Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214737]

Mr. MacShane: There was one meeting of the EU-Kazakhstan Co-operation Committee during this period—on 23 March 2004 in Astana. As Co-operation Committees are chaired by the Commission, with support from the Presidency, there was no UK representative at this meeting. However, the UK participated fully in formulating the EU's position for the meeting.

European Constitution

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what research his Department undertook regarding the question in the referendum on the EU constitution; [214336]

(2) what opinion polling evidence his Department considered or commissioned regarding potential questions in the referendum on the EU constitution; [214337]

(3) what focus group research his Department considered or commissioned regarding potential questions in the referendum on the EU constitution; [214338]

(4) what consultations, and with whom, his Department carried out regarding potential questions in the referendum on the EU constitution; [214339]

(5) with which *(a)* Government organisations and Departments, *(b)* non-government organisations, *(c)* private companies, *(d)* institutions of the European Union and *(e)* other bodies he consulted regarding potential questions in the referendum on the EU constitution; [214340]

(6) when he decided the wording of the question to be used in the referendum on the EU constitution. [214341]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply

There has been no research, opinion polling, focus group research or consultation on the question providing for a referendum on the treaty establishing a constitution for the European Union. No non-government organisations, private companies, institutions of the European Union organisation or other bodies were consulted.

The question was drafted bearing in mind the Electoral Commission's guidelines, which are designed to ensure a question is intelligible. The Electoral Commission's views on the question in Lord Blackwell's Private Member's Bill of July 2004 were also taken into account.

The wording of the question was decided following agreement at ministerial level with relevant Departments.

European Constitution (Gibraltar)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what legal advice he has taken on the consequences for the UK referendum on the EU Constitution of a decision by Gibraltar not to hold a referendum. [215210]

Mr. MacShane: The hon. Member will be aware that the people of Gibraltar will be entitled to vote in the referendum on the EU Constitutional Treaty.

Iraq

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the awarding of contracts for *(a)* reconstruction and *(b)* the privatisation of public services during the period of the interim government in Iraq. [214219]

Mr. Rammell: Following the end of occupation on 28 June 2004, responsibility for contracts funded from the Development Fund for Iraq (DPI) passed to the Iraqi Government. The US Project and Contracting Office (PCO) continues to manage DPI funded contracts awarded prior to 28 June 2004.

The DPI continues to be monitored by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB), mandated under United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1483 of 22 May 2003 and 1546 of 8 June 2004 to ensure DPI funds are used in a transparent manner and for purposes benefiting the Iraqi people.

US-funded contracts previously issued by the dissolved Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) are now the responsibility of the PCO. The PCO contracts and manages the disbursal of US Supplemental funds.

Contracts funded by the International Reconstruction Trust Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) are issued by the World Bank and UN under their respective procurement procedures for projects proposed by the Iraqi Government.

Israel

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli Government following the recent killing of an 10-year-old schoolgirl and the injuring of another by Israeli forces in Rafah. [214282]

Mr. Rammell: The exact circumstances surrounding the killing of a 10-year-old Palestinian schoolgirl in Rafah, Gaza are still not clear. Our staff in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are monitoring the situation closely.

Whatever the outcome of this case, we deplore the number of civilian casualties, particularly children, which have resulted from this conflict, and call on both sides to act with restraint.

Jamatta Islah-ul-Mushimeen

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's discussions with the government of the United Arab Emirates about the Islamic group Jamatta Islah-ul-Mushimeen; what the purpose of these talks was; on what date they were held; at what level they were held; and what the outcome was. [210740]

Mr. Rammell *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* My right hon. and noble Friend the Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean visited the United Arab Emirates last month where, among other bilateral issues, she discussed terrorism. These discussions included a number of groups of concern.

Kosovo

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what consultations he has had with European countries regarding the human rights situation in Kosovo; and if he will make a statement. [214452]

Mr. MacShane: The UN Security Council-endorsed Standards are central to improving human rights in Kosovo. In March 2004, the publication of the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan gave new impetus to work to create a multi-ethnic, stable and democratic Kosovo. We discuss Standards and their implementation regularly with EU partners; in particular how the EU can continue to support the efforts of the wider international community, including the Contact Group, to move Kosovo towards a resolution of its final status.

EU countries provide practical assistance for the implementation of Standards in Kosovo bilaterally and through the Commission's €173 million CARDS assistance programme. In particular, the CARDS programme has contributed €11 million in direct support for organised return and resettlement projects for internally displaced persons.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the occupants of each make towards running costs; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment was in 2003–04. [213559]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) maintains official residential accommodation and conference facilities at 1 Carlton Gardens, London. The running costs for the last five financial years for the residential accommodation, currently unoccupied, are as follows:

£

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Maintenance	24,561	15,918	1,245	4,089	8,910
Renovation (capital and refurbishment)	0	0	0	0	0
Council tax	350	375	410	491	570
Running costs—rent	27,300	54,000	54,000	54,000	54,772
Utilities	1,620	4,723	5,251	3,971	2,150
Total	53,831	75,016	60,906	62,551	66,402

A rent review in April 2000 resulted in a rental increase. There are no separate records available for expenditure on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills in 2003–04 at this property. No maintenance or domestic staff are employed.

The FCO is also responsible for running Head of Missions' Residences overseas. The budgets for this are held at overseas posts; the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Peacekeeping Forces

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost has been to the United Kingdom in each of the last five years of UK peacekeeping forces; and if he will make a statement. [214384]

Mr. Rammell: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has been administering the Government's financial contributions to peacekeeping and other peace support operations since 2001. That is when funding these activities was brought within the management structure of the Africa and Global Conflict Prevention Pools, except where the scale or volatility of such activity would seriously impact on other pool activities. The Global and Africa Conflict Prevention Pools combine the knowledge and resources of the Ministry of Defence, Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. It has a unique funding arrangement specifically voted by Parliament for conflict prevention and reduction. Total expenditure on peacekeeping and peace support operations from the pools since 2001 is shown in the table. The figures include both assessed and voluntary contributions to the UN and other organisations.

	Nearest £ million
Financial year	*Cost*
2001–02	458
2002–03	386
2003–04	288
2004–05	[1]336

[1] Current forecast: accounts to be finalised after the end of the 2004–05 financial year.

Opinion Polls

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what contracts his Department has agreed with organisations for opinion polling or related research in the past 24 months; [214342]

(2) what research into public opinion his Department has commissioned over the past 24 months; [214343]

(3) if he will list all organisations or individuals that have provided public opinion research to his Department over the past 24 months; [214344]

(4) if he will list all organisations or individuals with which his Department has agreed contracts for research projects over the past 24 months; [214345]

(5) if he will list all public opinion research projects that his Department has carried out over the past 24 months. [214346]

Mr. Mullin: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has commissioned opinion research projects over the past 24 months to better target both the promotion of Britain overseas and the FCO's overseas public diplomacy campaigns. It has also commissioned research in Britain so as to communicate better with the UK general public about issues to consider when travelling overseas, and to help focus and inform the FCO's outreach activity with civil society and faith communities.

Contracts to deliver this research have been awarded to the following agencies, each of which was selected in accordance with public sector procurement guidelines. These are:

MORI
NOP
Prescient
Synovate
Wardle McLean
Webstar.

A number of our overseas posts, as well as the FCO's non-departmental public bodies, also commission opinion research occasionally. However, a comprehensive list of these projects is not held centrally, and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what public opinion research his Department has undertaken, commissioned or received regarding *(a)* the EU Constitution and *(b)* the European Union in the past 24 months. [214347]

Mr. MacShane: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office commissioned ICM to carry out a series of focus groups in June 2004 to test the clarity of its "Guide to the European Union" before publication. In addition, officials collate information on publicly available research into public opinion on EU matters from a range of other sources.

Qualified Majority Voting

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the annex setting out policy areas in the new treaty which have moved to qualified majority voting or co-decision, to which he refers in his statement of 26 January, *Official Report*, column 17WS, includes all the areas listed in his answer of 5 July 2004 to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis), *Official Report*, column 592W. [215353]

Mr. MacShane: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in a Written Ministerial Statement of 26 January, Annex 1 to the Commentary on the Constitutional Treaty (Cm 6459) updates and supplements the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest East (Julian Lewis) on 5 July 2004 *Official Report*, columns 592–3W. Three Articles mentioned in that answer are not listed in Annex 1. They are: Article III-266 (formerly III-167) concerning asylum policy, all aspects of which will shortly move to QMV under the current (Nice) Treaties and which was still an open question at the time of my earlier answer; Article III-311 (formerly III-212) concerning the European Defence Agency, which has now been established under the current Treaties by a unanimous joint action of the Council in July 2004 (OJ L245 17.7.2004 p17); and Article III-196 (formerly III-90) concerning international aspects of the euro, which would only apply to the UK if it adopts the euro.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions his Department's Ministers used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213701]

Mr. Straw: In the past five years, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and I have used the aircraft of 32 (The Royal) Squadron as follows:

	Number of occasions
2000	47
2001	39
2002	45
2003	39
2004	34

The VC10s on the Squadron were withdrawn at the end of 2001 and one of the BAE 146s in November 2001.

Severance Grants

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 January, *Official Report*, column 27W, on severance grants, what monitoring of the internal management of communities institutions his Department undertakes. [215331]

Mr. MacShane: The UK was heavily involved in the Prodi Commission's work to modernise the Institutions of the EU, including the negotiations that culminated in reform of the EC Staff Regulations. The policy reform introduced a new careers structure, rules governing the field of professional and ethical standards, and modernised rules regarding external mobility, middle management conditions and salaries and pensions structures. The UK will continue to participate in Working Groups looking at institutional issues such as these during the Barroso Commission.

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the decision to suspend the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation summit scheduled to take place in Dhaka on 6 February; what information he has received on the reasons for the suspension; and if he will make a statement. [214727]

Mr. Alexander: The decision to suspend the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) summit due to have been held in Dhaka on 6–7 February was taken by the Bangladesh Government following Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's withdrawal from the conference. Under the SAARC Charter, a summit cannot be held without the participation of all the leaders of the seven member states.

The Indian Government have indicated that their decision was taken due to recent developments in Nepal and concerns about the security situation in Dhaka. We understand that fresh dates for the Summit will now be worked out through consultations among SAARC's member states. The UK supports fully the SAARC member states' aim to increase economic co-operation between the countries of South Asia and we hope that a new meeting will be arranged quickly.

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the recent problems in Port Sudan, Province of Sudan, with particular reference to *(a)* the actions of the Sudanese Army and *(b)* the arrest and detention of Beja Congress leaders; [215068]

(2) if he will seek information on the demonstration in Port Sudan on 29 January, with particular reference to violence perpetrated by the police. [215069]

Mr. Mullin: On 28 January, the Beja Congress in Port Sudan held a demonstration in protest against their marginalisation from social and political life. This followed clashes in the East of Sudan between the Beja and the Government, on 25 January. The demonstrations turned violent, and we understand that approximately 20 people were killed when police opened fire. The situation is reportedly now calmer, though tensions remain high. The majority of those arrested in relation to the incident have now been released, but a number of Beja leaders remain in detention.

We are very concerned about increased tensions, and these specific incidents, in eastern Sudan. We have urged the Government of Sudan to show restraint, and made clear that attacks on civilians are totally unacceptable. We have also made clear that both sides should work together to resolve their grievances peacefully, within the framework of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

UN Office on Drugs and Crime

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to achieve their target of eradicating drug misuse by the year 2008; and if he will make a statement. [214494]

Mr. Rammell: The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has made important progress on a range of issues regarding drug misuse as detailed in the 2004 World Drug Report. Nevertheless, it is clear that important challenges remain. The Government are committed to continuing to work closely with UNODC to confront these challenges.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Recipients (High Peak)

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the High Peak constituency are receiving *(a)* jobseeker's allowance, *(b)* incapacity benefit and *(c)* income support; and how many were receiving each in 1997. [210794]

Mr. Pond: The information is in the table.

Number of people receiving income support (IS), incapacity benefit (IB) jobseeker's allowance (JSA) in High Peak in August 1997 and August 2004

	1997	2004
IS	4,100	2,200
JSA	1,595	835
IB	3,200	3,400

Notes:

1. IS and IB figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding. JSA figures are not rounded.
2. IS and IB Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation. JSA figures are based on a 100 per cent. sample.
3. From November 2003 IS figures are severely affected by the introduction of pension credit, which replaced MIG on 6 October 2003 and extended income support entitlement to customers aged 60+. Pension credit cases are not included in the figures in the table.
4. IB figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).

Source:

1. IS and IB figures are from DWP information centre.
2. JSA figures are from a count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems (including clerically held cases).

Credit Union Accounts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) whether benefit recipients may receive their benefits directly into a credit union account; and what agreement has been made with the Association of British Credit Unions concerning the necessary arrangements; [214602]

(2) what plans he has to enable recipients of pensions to use credit unions as the mechanism for direct payments of pensions; and what arrangements he has entered into with the Association of British Credit Unions on the arrangements for doing so. [214622]

Mr. Pond: Benefit recipients may, at their request, have benefits paid into a Credit Union account. This is a change of approach by the Department, which until recently advised benefit recipients against payment of benefits direct into any Credit Union. The change reflects discussion with the Association of British Credit Unions that in some situations such payments will now meet the needs of benefit recipients.

The agreement covers all Credit Unions in England, Scotland and Wales reflecting that all such unions are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and can hold money on behalf of others.

Benefit recipients who request payment into a Credit Union account are normally asked to contact their individual Credit Union to discuss access arrangements before they finally decide if payment into a Credit Union is the appropriate account option for them.

Not all Credit Unions will accept payments of benefits, because they do not have the ability to link funds paid into their central account quickly to individual accounts. Some are only open one or two days a week and are unable to provide the customer with access to their benefit on the day of entitlement.

Disability Discrimination Act

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what timetable he has set to extend the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to cover general qualifications. [214620]

Maria Eagle: The Government's indicative timetable for implementing provisions in the Disability Discrimination Bill was set out in their response to the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Committee on the Draft Disability Discrimination Bill (Cm 6276). Since that document was published the Bill, which is currently before the House of Lords, has been revised to take account of the pre-legislative scrutiny process. In line with our timetable for implementing the Bill's provisions that would generally require the support of a Code of Practice, the intention is that the extension of the DDA to cover qualifications bodies offering general qualifications, which is a provision added since scrutiny, would come into force in December 2006.

Disability/Sickness Allowances

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the size range of the proposed *(a)* rehabilitation support allowance and *(b)* disability and sickness allowance are expected to be. [215055]

Maria Eagle: No specific size range has been set. However, people on the rehabilitation support allowance who participate in work-focused interviews and take steps to prepare for a return to work will receive a level of benefit higher than the current long-term rate of contributory incapacity benefit. People on the disability and sickness allowance will also receive a level of benefit higher than the current long-term rate but this will not be dependent on them taking steps to prepare for a return to work.

Gershon Review

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobs he estimates will be lost on Merseyside as a result of the Gershon Review. [214597]

Maria Eagle: As part of the efficiency programme detailed business and staffing plans continue to be developed across the Department. At this stage it is therefore not possible to provide a figure for potential staff reductions that may occur across Merseyside.

In the first phase of planning and as part of the ongoing modernisation of service delivery it has been decided that the Liverpool Pension Centre will no longer deal with Pension Service work after this financial year. Plans for the future of the Pension Centre site and staff have yet to be finalised.

Housing Benefit

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed housing benefit in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [215390]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available.

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many directives his Department has issued to local authorities regarding the processing of housing benefit in each year since 1997; [215129]

(2) how his Department measures the impact of the directives it issues on the processing of housing benefit by local authorities. [215260]

Mr. Pond: Local authorities are obliged to administer housing benefit in accordance with the appropriate legislation. In order to assist them in this the Department provides them with a range of guidance material including the Housing Benefit Guidance Manual, which is updated regularly. We also issues circulars giving guidance on administration, subsidy and fraud. The number of such circulars issued in each year is shown in the table.

Number of housing benefit circulars issued by DWP

	Administrative	*Fraud*	*Subsidy*	*Total*
1997	58	21	5	84
1998	60	21	8	89
1999	54	19	8	81
2000	53	15	5	73
2001	53	25	8	86
2002	34	29	8	71
2003	40	29	11	80
2004	35	10	8	53
2005 (to date)	3	1	1	5

We monitor and measure local authority processing times through a range of Best Value Performance Indicators and statutory performance indicators. Local authorities provide quarterly statistical returns to the Department. These statistics show that new claims were processed, on average 12 days quicker in 2003–04 than in 2001–02. The second quarter of 2004–05 shows further improvements, with the average number of days to process new claims reducing from 50 days to 47 when compared to the same quarter of 2003–04.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefit in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [215385]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in Scotland by parliamentary constituency, at 31 August 2004

	IB/SDA	*IB*	*SDA*
Aberdeen Central	4,600	4,100	*400
Aberdeen North	3,300	3,000	*300
Aberdeen South	3,200	2,900	*400
Airdrie and Shotts	7,200	6,500	700
Angus	3,500	2,900	500
Argyll and Bute	3,200	2,900	*400
Ayr	4,000	3,300	700
Banff and Buchan	4,600	3,900	700
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross	2,600	2,200	*400
Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley	5,800	5,300	500
Central Fife	5,600	4,900	700
Clydebank and Milngavie	3,900	3,600	*300
Clydesdale	6,100	5,200	900
Coatbridge and Chryston	5,900	5,300	600
Cumbernauld and Kilsyth	4,600	4,100	500
Cunninghame North	4,000	3,600	500
Cunninghame South	5,300	4,800	500
Dumbarton	4,400	4,100	*300
Dumfries	3,600	3,100	500
Dundee East	5,300	4,500	800
Dundee West	5,100	4,300	700
Dunfermline East	4,800	4,300	500
Dunfermline West	3,300	2,900	*400
East Kilbride	4,000	3,700	*300
East Lothian	4,000	3,500	*500
Eastwood	3,600	3,200	*400
Edinburgh Central	3,900	3,300	600
Edinburgh East and Musselburgh	5,500	4,800	600
Edinburgh North and Leith	4,400	3,900	*400
Edinburgh Pentlands	3,300	2,900	*400
Edinburgh South	3,400	2,700	700
Edinburgh West	2,500	2,200	*400
Falkirk East	4,200	3,700	500
Falkirk West	4,600	4,100	600
Galloway and Upper Nithsdale	3,800	3,400	*400
Glasgow Anniesland	5,800	5,200	600
Glasgow Baillieston	7,500	6,900	500
Glasgow Cathcart	5,800	5,600	*300
Glasgow Govan	5,900	5,500	*400
Glasgow Kelvin	5,600	5,100	*400
Glasgow Maryhill	7,700	7,200	500
Glasgow Pollok	5,600	5,000	700
Glasgow Rutherglen	6,000	5,600	*400
Glasgow Shettleston	9,800	9,200	700
Glasgow Springburn	8,000	7,400	600
Gordon	2,400	2,100	*300
Greenock and Inverclyde	5,100	4,700	*400
Hamilton North and Bellshill	6,000	5,600	*400
Hamilton South	5,100	4,600	500
Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber	3,700	3,100	600
Kilmarnock and Loudoun	5,100	4,500	600
Kirkcaldy	3,900	3,400	500
Linlithgow	4,500	3,900	500
Livingston	4,800	4,300	500
Midlothian	3,300	3,000	*300
Moray	3,000	2,500	500
Motherwell and Wishaw	5,800	5,300	600
North East Fife	1,800	1,600	*200
North Tayside	2,600	2,200	500
Ochil	4,500	4,200	*300
Orkney and Shetland	1,500	1,000	*400
Paisley North	5,700	5,100	600
Paisley South	4,900	4,500	*400

All incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in Scotland by parliamentary constituency, at 31 August 2004

	IB/SDA	*IB*	*SDA*
Perth	3,800	3,300	500
Ross, Skye and Inverness West	3,900	3,500	*300
Roxburgh and Berwickshire	2,600	2,300	*300
Stirling	3,500	3,000	*400
Strathkelvin and Bearsden	3,400	2,900	500
Tweeddale, Ettrick and Lauderdale	2,500	2,200	*300
West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine	2,000	1,800	*200
West Renfrewshire	4,300	3,900	*400
Western Isles	1,200	1,100	*100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability allowance and incapacity benefit credits-only cases.
3. Figures marked "*" are based on very few sample cases and therefore subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefit in each year from 1996. [210735]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants, in the quarters shown

As at August:	*Number*
1996	2,746,300
1997	2,739,900
1998	2,672,600
1999	2,645,900
2000	2,653,400
2001	2,703,600
2002	2,706,700
2003	2,715,800
2004	2,704,200

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and credits-only cases; they include a small number of claimants resident overseas.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. samples

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent on *(a)* short-term incapacity benefit at the lower rate, *(b)* short-term incapacity benefit at the higher rate and *(c)* long-term incapacity benefit in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by constituency. [211005]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available in the format requested. The available information has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants there are in each constituency in the County of Durham other than Easington. [213533]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is as follows.

All incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the requested parliamentary constituency at 31 August 2004

	Number
Bishop Auckland	6,200
City of Durham	4,800
Darlington	5,300
North Durham	6,300
North West Durham	5,500
Sedgefield	6,800

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures include all incapacity benefit, severe disability Allowance and credits-only cases.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the change in benefit payments that will occur as a result of the replacement of incapacity benefit for some claimants *(a)* with the proposed rehabilitation support allowance and *(b)* with the proposed disability and sickness allowance. [214817]

Maria Eagle: Our intention is to replace incapacity benefits for new claimants to ensure people with health conditions and disabilities are helped to prepare for a return to the labour market wherever feasible.

As part of this new regime claimants of the rehabilitation support allowance will be required to participate in work-focused interviews and take steps to prepare for a return to work. Fulfilling both these requirements would mean claimants receiving a level of benefit payment higher than the current long-term rate of contributory incapacity benefit. People on the disability and sickness allowance would also receive a level of benefit payment higher than the current long-term rate but this will not be dependent on them taking steps to prepare for a return to work.

Specific payment rates for the future benefit regime have not yet been set. Overall expenditure implications of these new payments would depend on the rates set.

Official Residences

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the official residences for which his Department is responsible; who occupies each one; what the annual cost is of running each property; what contribution the current occupants make towards the running costs of each; what the total capital and refurbishment expenditure has been on those properties in each of the past five years; how much money was spent in each property on *(a)* flowers and plants, *(b)* wine and entertaining, *(c)* food, *(d)* telephone bills and *(e)* electricity and gas in 2003–04; how many (i) domestic and (ii) maintenance staff are employed at each property, broken down by post; and what the total cost of staff employment at each was in 2003–04. [213611]

Maria Eagle: DWP is not responsible for any official residences.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of the Pathways to Work projects in the year to March; and what the estimated cost will be in each of the subsequent four years. [215286]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

Pathways to Work projects

	Estimated costs (£)
2004–05	43,040,935
2005–06	84,290,000
2006–07	148,790,000
2007–08	165,890,000
2008–09	165,890,000

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average amount budgeted per claimant on Condition Management Schemes in the new Pathways to Work pilots is; [215287]

(2) how many claimants have gone on Condition Management Schemes in the new Pathways to Work pilots; and what the average spend per client is. [215288]

Maria Eagle: To November 2004, 2,731 customers had been referred to Condition Management programmes in the Pathways to Work pilots.

The current average amount budgeted for individual incapacity benefit customers who enter the Pathways to Work Condition Management Programme is £1,500. Information concerning the average actual spend per client is not available.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* voluntary and *(b)* private sector providers are contracted to provide services which aim to get and keep disabled people into work in (i) the areas in which the Pathways to Work programme is operating and (ii) the next set of areas into which the Pathways to Work programme will be rolled out, broken down by area. [215399]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

Pathways to Work area	*Number of voluntary sector providers*	*Number of private sector providers*
Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff	3	5
Derbyshire	3	4
East Lancashire	1	2
Essex	6	1
Gateshead and South Tyneside	4	2
Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute	[1]6	4
Somerset	3	5
Total	26	23

[1] Includes two voluntary bodies that cover the whole of Scotland.

There are also four Workstep national providers, classed as voluntary and charity run, and 62 New Deal for Disabled People providers whose service across the country includes the Pathways to Work pilot areas.

It is not possible to provide specific information for the 14 additional Pathways to Work districts, as services and contracts are still to be agreed.

Advance Payments (Bank Holidays)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reasons pension allowances due to be paid on bank holidays over the Christmas period were not paid before Christmas; and what steps he will take to ensure that payment of allowances is not delayed during the next holiday period. [208305]

Mr. Pond: The vast majority of customers who were due to be paid on bank holidays over the Christmas and new year period received payments in advance as planned. An IT failure resulted in some of the customers who were due payment on 3 January not receiving the advance payment that we had planned for 31 December. These customers were paid on 5 January. We have worked with our IT partners to improve the payment system. We are thoroughly testing the proposed solution to ensure payments are advanced appropriately for forthcoming holiday periods.

Pension Credit

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners receive pension credit in the Easington constituency. [214929]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each constituency at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Warrington, North are receiving pension credit; and what the average award is. [214965]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each constituency at 31 December 2004, with the average award, is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Mr. Ronnie Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Blyth Valley were receiving *(a)* pension credit and *(b)* winter fuel payments on the latest date for which figures are available. [214207]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each constituency at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library. Information on the number of people who received winter fuel payments for winter 2003–04 in Blyth Valley is also available in the Library.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for how long he plans to retain pension credit; and if he will make a statement. [214814]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country. We are always thinking about how financial support to pensioners could be improved.

We need to provide a balance between providing a solid foundation of support, while targeting help to those who need it most—the poorest pensioners. Pension credit is an integral part of that strategy. Our priority now is to work towards at least 3 million households receiving pension credit by 2006.

Pensioner Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners were living below the poverty line in each of the last 30 years. [214028]

Malcolm Wicks: Poverty is about more than low income; it also impacts on the way people live—their health, housing and the quality of their environment. The sixth annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6239), published in September 2004, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy.

Specific information regarding low income for the United Kingdom is available in Households Below Average Income 1994–95 to 2002–03. These publications are available in the Library.

The following table sets out available information on the percentage and number of pensioners living in households with income less than 60 per cent. of median (before and after housing costs). As the IPS has noted, pensioners

> "are no longer any more likely to be poor than non-pensioners, measuring incomes after housing costs."

	Before housing costs		*After housing costs*	
	Number (million)	*Percentage*	*Number (million)*	*Percentage*
Based on the Family Expenditure Survey (FES)				
1979	2.5	28	2.6	28
1981	1.5	16	1.9	20
1987	2.4	24	2.7	27
1988–89	3.3	33	3.8	39
1990–91	3.3	32	3.6	36
1991–92	2.9	28	3.3	32
1992–93	2.5	24	3.0	29
1993–94	2.2	22	2.8	27
1994–95	2.1	21	2.7	27
1995–96	2.2	21	2.8	28
Based on the Family Resources Survey (FRS)				
1994–95	2.1	21	2.7	27
1995–96	2.2	22	2.5	25
1996–97	2.1	21	2.7	27
1997–98	2.2	22	2.7	27
1998–99	2.3	23	2.7	27
1999–2000	2.2	22	2.5	25
2000–01	2.1	21	2.4	24
2001–02	2.2	22	2.2	22
2002–03	2.1	21	2.2	21

Family Expenditure Survey (FES) figures are for the United Kingdom, Family Resources Survey (FRS) figures are for Great Britain. The reference period for FRS figures is single financial years. FES figures are single calendar years from 1979–87, two combined calendar years from 1998–89 to 1992–93 and two financial years combined from 1993–94 to 1995–96. Because of differences between the two surveys results are not strictly comparable.

Sure Start

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many mothers in Pendle have received the Sure Start maternity grant. [214837]

Mr. Pond: The information is not available in the format requested; the available information is in the table.

Sure Start maternity grant (SSMG) awards for Greater Manchester Lancashire Social Fund District/East Lancashire Jobcentre Plus District

	Awards
2000–01	2,405
2001–02	2,998
2002–03	3,452
2003–04	3,539
2004–05	2,991

Notes:

1. SSMGs were introduced on 27 March 2000. The very small number of cases for 1999–2000 has been excluded for data protection reasons.
2. Data is not available by parliamentary constituency, but only by District.
3. Pendle parliamentary constituency is part of East Lancashire Jobcentre Plus District, which was previously called Greater Manchester Lancashire Social Fund District.
4. Data is given for all awards, irrespective of whether the award was made to the mother or her partner.

Source:

DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Thalidomide Trust

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will alter the rules relating to income support so as to allow recipients of grants from the Thalidomide Trust to spend such grants on ongoing household expenses without losing their income support entitlement; [211186]

(2) if he will alter the rules relating to *(a)* income support, *(b)* care funding and *(c)* the Independent Living Fund to allow recipients of grants from the Thalidomide Trust to take their full entitlement to such grants at the beginning of the year without losing their entitlement to those benefits. [211187]

Mr. Pond: Payments to beneficiaries of the Thalidomide Trust are treated in the same way as other personal injury payments for income-related benefits, including income support. Capital that is placed in trust for an individual can be disregarded. Income from an individual's trust can also be disregarded as long as the income is used for items other than food, ordinary clothing or footwear, household fuel, rent or rates, certain housing costs or water charges other than day-to-day living expenses. These items are provided for by income-related benefits.

The Independent Living Funds broadly follow income support policy on this issue. Independent Living Fund payments are intended to provide for personal care and domestic assistance. Therefore, income from an individual's trust can be disregarded as long as no part of the income is used for personal care or domestic assistance.

The financial assessment for residential accommodation is assessed by local authority social services, taking into account the Charging for Residential Accommodation Guide issued by the Department of Health. Payments from the Thalidomide Trust are taken into account in the same way as they are for assessing income-related benefits.

For home care charges, social services have a minimum requirement to follow the Fairer Charging for Home Care and other non-residential social services guidance, issued to local authorities by the Department of Health in 2001, but can be more generous if they wish.

We recently received representations regarding the treatment of payments to the Thalidomide Trust's beneficiaries, and to ensure the matters raised receive the appropriate consideration, a meeting has been arranged with the Director of the Thalidomide Trust.

Winter Fuel Payment (Stockton, South)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in each electoral ward in Stockton, South constituency claimed winter fuel allowance in 2003–04; and how many have claimed the allowance in 2004–05; [214722]

(2) how many people in each ward of Stockton, South claimed winter fuel allowance in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [215302]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each electoral ward in Stockton, South who received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 is in the following table. Figures are not yet available for winter 2004–05 but we expect the numbers to be similar.

Ward	*Winter fuel payment recipients*
Bishopsgarth	1,540
Egglescliffe	1,740
Elm Tree	1,230
Fairfield	1,210
Grangefield	905
Hartburn	1,670
Ingleby Barwick	1,425
Mandate	1,055
Parkfield	835
Preston	645
Stainsby	1,065
Victoria	900
Village	1,315
Yarm	1,545

Notes:

1. All wards based on census wards—those current as at April 2003.
2. WFP data is the latest currently available, winter 2003–04.
3. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre

Workstep Scheme

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many programmes under the Workstep Scheme have *(a)* failed their audit and *(b)* been subject to re-audit. [212123]

Maria Eagle: Up to the 27 January 2005, 76 Workstep providers have been inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). Of those, 41 providers failed their ALI inspection, 15 have been re-inspected and of those re-inspections, 12 passed, one failed and two are waiting to be informed of the outcome. A further 19 re-inspections are scheduled to be completed in the coming year.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average cost per client of the Workstep scheme was in the last period for which figures are available. [212124]

Maria Eagle: During 2003–04, the Workstep programme received £189.2 million of Government funding and supported 31,632 disabled people, representing an average cost of £5,981 per supported employee.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent changes have been made in the provision of funds for training for the Workstep programme; and if he will make a statement. [212126]

Maria Eagle: There has been one recent change to Workstep funding arrangements. From 1 April 2004, the payment to providers for each participant in a Workstep placement was increased to £400 per calendar month for all participants working 21 hours or more per week. This change ensured that providers received the same monthly amount for those people new to Workstep as they did for those carried forward from the old Supported Employment programme.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Housing

8. **Sir Teddy Taylor:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses he expects will be built in the Southend area under his plans for housing development in the south-east of England. [214876]

Phil Hope: It will be for the current review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England to determine how many homes should be built in the Southend area.

10. **Ms Dari Taylor:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to increase investment in modernising publicly owned homes. [214878]

Keith Hill: Since 1997, investment in existing council homes has been significantly increased. By 2004 councils were spending 13 per cent. more in real terms than 1997. In addition £6 billion has so far been made available to set up Arms Length Management Organisations and Private Finance Initiatives. £5.3 billion has been levered in from the private sector through stock transfer.

11. **Mr. Love:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to build more affordable accommodation over the next five years. [214879]

Keith Hill: "Sustainable Communities: Homes for All" sets out the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's plans to deliver more affordable housing over the next five years. Measures include assisting over 80,000 first time buyers and keyworkers to achieve their home ownership aspirations, and through investment and efficiency savings to deliver 75,000 social rented homes by 2008.

12. **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on housing allocations for the south-east. [214880]

Keith Hill: Housing allocations are currently set out in Regional Planning Guidance for the south-east (RPG9), published in March 2001, and partially updated during 2004.

There is a statutory planning process for reviewing the housing figures. At this stage the South East England Regional Assembly is responsible for examining alternative spatial options for the future development of the south-east. It would not be right for us to pre-empt the outcome of their consultation and the Examination in Public that will follow. Therefore Government will not make a statement about revised housing figures at this stage.

14. **Mr. Cummings:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to improve the quality of existing homes. [214882]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has set a target to ensure all homes in the social sector meet the decent homes standard by 2010, and to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in decent homes in the private sector. We are implementing policies to achieve this target.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable houses were built in *(a)* Plymouth and *(b)* Devon in 2004. [213981]

Keith Hill: The total number of affordable homes provided in 2003–04 through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP), the transitional Local Authority Social Housing Grant and Starter Home Initiative for Plymouth and Devon (including Plymouth and Torbay) are tabled:

	Number
Devon	457
Of which: Plymouth	81

Source:
Housing Corporation

These figures include acquisitions and refurbishments as well as new build.

Dr. Stark[illegible]: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the affordable housing schemes funded in Milton Keynes in each of the last three years indicating *(a)* the numbers of units in each location and *(b)* how many units in each scheme are for key workers. [215271]

Keith Hill: During the three-year period between 2001–02 to 2003–04 there were a total of 1,152 affordable dwellings funded in Milton Keynes at a cost of £23,090,000 of which 516 were for key workers. In addition, funding of £14,959,000 has been allocated for the 2004–06 period, which is expected to fund 881 affordable dwellings of which 330 should be for key worker provision.

A detailed breakdown of schemes and funding for each year has been made available in the Library of the House.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many non-decent council homes there are in Crosby; and how many there were in 1997. [214593]

Keith Hill: The information requested is submitted to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister according to housing authority areas rather than districts within an area. Crosby is a district of Sefton. In 2004 Sefton reported to have 7936 non-decent council homes. Figures are not available for 1997, as the Decent Homes Standard was not introduced until 2001.

Regional Spatial Strategy (North-East)

9. **Mr. Beith:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what role his Department has had in the preparation and approval of the regional spatial strategy for the north-east. [214877]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government Office for the North East, on behalf of the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, has provided advice and guidance to the North East Assembly (as Regional Planning Body) during the preparation of the draft Regional Spatial Strategy. This is currently out for consultation, and will be formally submitted to my right hon. Friend in March 2005.

Fire Service (Scotland)

13. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions his Department has had with Scottish Executive Ministers regarding fire service pay. [214881]

Mr. Raynsford: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has had no such discussions since the June 2003 pay and modernisation agreement was signed, other than to discuss the UK-wide approach to any use of the powers contained in sections 32 and 33 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004.

Area Cost Adjustment

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will undertake a review of the methodology used to calculate Area Cost Adjustment. [214873]

Mr. Raynsford: The current Area Cost Adjustment has been in place since 2003–04. While it is generally recognised to be an improvement on the previous arrangements for reflecting additional costs to local government arising from wage differentials, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is aware of the concerns about its impact expressed by some authorities. We will therefore be ready to discuss with local government the case for a review of the ACA alongside other priorities for the forthcoming formulae review.

Consents

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the consent *(a)* requests and *(b)* permissions from local authorities which his Department has (i) accepted and (ii) refused in the most recent full year for which figures are available. [213576]

Mr. Raynsford: A comprehensive review of local authority consent regimes was undertaken by an efficiency scrutiny in 1997. The following table contains the consent requirements identified in the scrutiny which are the responsibility of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The table sets out for those regimes the number of requests made to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for consent, and the number granted, during the financial year 2003–04.

Description	*Legislative reference*	*Number of requests*	*Number granted*
Power to consent to the delegation of housing management to an agent	Housing Act 1985 s.27 (as substituted by Housing and Planning Act 1986 s.10 and amended by Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 s.129)	40	36
Powers to consent to the disposal of council-owned housing and housing land; and to consent to local authority assistance for privately let housing	Housing Act 1985 s.32; also Local Government Act 1972 s.32, Housing Act 1985 ss.19 and 43 leasehold Reform Housing and Urban Development Act 1993, s.135 Local Government Act 1988 s.25	130	130
Power to approve a variation of the model registration scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation	Housing Act 1985 s.346B(4) (as amended by Housing Act 1996 s.65)	3	3
Power to set statutory upper limits on Defective Housing grants, but also to relax those limits in certain circumstances	Housing Act 1985, s.543(4) (as amended by s166 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989)—The Housing Defects (Expenditure Limits) Order 1992 (SI 1992 No.446)	0	0
Relates to the application of additional conditions for housing renewal and disabled facilities grants, and to alter the 'required proportion' of flats in a block in order to qualify for a common parts grant	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 s.34(6)*(b)* and s.14(3)*(b)*	0	0
Relates to non-recovery of housing renewal grants on a relevant disposal, and to imposition of conditions, including requiring pursuit of other compensation, on housing renewal and disabled facilities grants	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, ss.45(4), 46(4), 47(4), s.51*(l)* and s.52*(l)*	2	2
Approval of various arrangements relating to group repair schemes	Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, s.63*(l)* and s.68(2)	0	0

Description	*Legislative reference*	*Number of requests*	*Number granted*
Control over Areas of Special Control of Advertisements (ASCAs)	Town and County Planning Act 1990 ss.220, 221, 223(1), 224(3) and 331(1). Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992 (SI 1992 No. 666) Reg. 18 as amended by Town and Country Planning Act (Control of Advertisements) Amendment Regulations 1994 (SI 1994 No. 2351)	2	2
Preparing proposals for the alteration or the replacement of a development plan, if it or any part of it has been previously approved by the Secretary of State	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, ss.21(1B), 32(3), and 39(3) (as amended by Planning and Compensation Act 1991). Town and Country Planning Act (Development Plan) Regulations, 1991	0	0
Three powers to confirm various orders revoking, modifying or otherwise affecting planning permissions or existing uses of land or existing buildings or works	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, ss. 94, 95, 97, 98 and 102	31	23
Requirement on local authorities to obtain Secretary of State's confirmation of orders revoking or modifying previous consents granted under tree preservation orders	Third schedule of the model form of tree preservation order in Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Order) Regulations 1969	0	0
A power to consent to capitalisation of redundancy costs	Local Government and Housing Act 1989 s.40(6)	44	40
Provision by local authorities of advice and assistance to overseas bodies (s.l(3) Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993)	Local Government (Overseas Assistance) Act 1993, s.1(3)	0	0
Disposal of land at less than best consideration	Local Government Act 1972, s.123 and 127 Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s.233	4	4
A power to consent to the sale or appropriation of statutory allotment land, or its use for other purposes	Allotments Act 1925 s.8	45	20
Reductions in a Fire Authority's establishment scheme	Fire Services Act 1947, s.19(4) as amended by Fire Services Act 1959	9	9

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to change the consent regimes that regulate the activities of local government. [213577]

Mr. Raynsford: As part of the Government's commitment to reduce bureaucracy for local authorities, we announced in 2002 a programme to deregulate 86 consent powers. We have identified further regimes since then where deregulation is planned to take place. We have so far deregulated 63 powers and have plans to deregulate a further 28. Listed as follows are the consent regimes which Government have plans to deregulate:

Description	*Legislative reference*	*Number of powers*
Amalgamation of hackney carriage licence zones	Local Government Act 1972, schedule 14 para. 25(4)	1
Approval of LEA's complaints procedure	Education Act 1996, s.409 and paragraph 6(3) of schedule 1	2
Instituting prosecutions for publishing certain advertisements concerning cancer treatment	Cancer Act 1939, s.4(6)	1
Provision by local authorities of advice and assistance to overseas bodies (s.1(3) Local Government (Overseas Bodies) Act 1993)	Local Government (Overseas Bodies) Act 1993, s.l (3)	1
Certain minority interests in certain companies. s.71(2) Local Government and Housing Act 19	Local Government and Housing Act 1989, s.71(2)	1
Approval of aspects of the registration service	Registration Service Act 1953, s.8*(1)* Registration Service Act 1953, s.10	3

Description	*Legislative reference*	*Number of powers*
	Registration Service Act 1953, s.14(4)	
Fixing traffic signs not specified in regulations	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 s.65 (as amended by sch. 8 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991)	1
Restricting vehicle access in London	City of London Various Powers Act 1963 s.33	1
Provision and declaration of walkways in London	City of London Various Powers Act 1967 s.6 and Greater London Council (General Powers) Act 1969 s.11	2
Extending experimental Traffic Regulation Orders in London	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.9	1
Extension of temporary orders	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.15	1
Provision of off-street parking for over 12 months on land compulsorily acquired for another purpose	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.40(3)	1
Special events order	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.16B (inserted by Road Traffic (Special Events) Act 1994)	1
Stopping or diverting highways in connection with development/amenity improvement	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, s.247, 248 and 249	2
Determine an inter-authority dispute over a permanent border	Local Government Act 1985, s.5	1
Traffic Regulation Orders limiting vehicle access to premises and stopping up private access	Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, sch.9(13–14) Highways Act 1980, ss. 124–125	2
Approval of the appointment of Coroners within Greater London, Metropolitan Counties and Berkshire	Coroners Act 1988, s.1(2)	1
Appoint medical referees and deputies as nominated by cremation authorities	Cremation Regulations 1930, reg. 10	1
A power to approve the alteration of Coroner's district boundaries	Coroners Act 1988 s.4(2) Coroners (Orders as to Districts) Rules 1927	1
Notification of agricultural operations on moor and heath in National Parks (to secure a temporary stopping order)	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, s.42	1
Powers to consent to the disposal of council-owned housing and housing land; and to consent to local authority assistance for privately let housing	Housing Act 1985 s.32; also Local Government Act 1972 s.132, Housing Act 1985 ss.19 and 43, Leasehold Reform, Housing and Urban Development Act 1993 s.129 Local Government Act 1988 s.25	2

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter dated 29 March 2004 from the hon. Member for Brent, East regarding Ms Kate Stone. [215626]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no record of receiving the hon. Member's letter of 29 March 2004. Officials have now obtained a copy of the letter from the hon. Member and a reply will be sent shortly.

Council Tax (London)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of council tax has been collected in each Greater London borough in each year since 1997; and what the total cost of administering council tax collection was in each year. [214565]

Mr. Raynsford: Listed in the following table are the reported in-year council tax collection rates for each London borough and the City of London for each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04. Figures for 2004–05 are not yet available. The collection of council tax continues after the end of the financial year to which it relates. This means that the percentage of council tax ultimately collected for any financial year is greater than that shown in the table.

In-year council tax collection rates[1] (percentage)

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Inner London:							
City of London	97.5	97.4	98.2	98.3	98.4	97.6	98.2
Camden	88.5	91.1	92.3	92.7	93.5	92.7	93.4
Greenwich	92.2	92.2	91.3	92.2	92.0	92.8	93.3
Hackney	78.1	74.5	67.9	67.8	74.0	79.5	79.3
Hammersmith and Fulham	89.1	92.3	93.2	93.8	94.5	95.1	95.2
Islington	88.3	88.9	90.2	90.0	91.5	88.4	90.5
Kensington and Chelsea	94.9	95.2	95.6	96.0	95.6	95.6	95.5
Lambeth	80.3	80.3	84.4	82.0	86.5	90.1	88.7
Lewisham	90.6	90.6	92.0	93.3	93.7	93.7	93.7
Southwark	81.9	81.3	80.2	87.1	90.2	92.0	92.0
Tower Hamlets	86.7	88.1	88.3	89.3	90.7	91.8	92.5
Wandsworth	90.9	91.4	92.8	94.0	94.5	94.8	94.9
Westminster	92.6	93.7	92.9	91.8	93.0	93.5	93.1
Average Inner London	88.0	88.5	88.7	89.6	91.1	91.9	92.0
Outer London:							
Barking and Dagenham	95.0	95.3	94.7	94.0	94.5	91.8	92.0
Barnet	95.1	95.3	95.6	95.8	96.2	96.2	95.5
Bexley	94.5	94.2	94.9	95.4	95.7	96.0	95.9
Brent	89.5	91.4	90.4	92.0	91.1	89.5	90.6
Bromley	97.4	97.0	96.3	96.6	96.5	96.4	96.8
Croydon	92.4	92.8	91.7	91.9	93.9	94.7	93.3
Ealing	94.8	94.9	94.4	93.4	94.1	94.6	95.4
Enfield	91.8	93.5	93.7	94.4	94.6	94.6	95.0
Haringey	82.3	85.0	85.1	88.8	90.1	92.5	93.1
Harrow	96.9	96.8	96.2	98.2	98.6	97.2	98.0
Havering	97.7	96.8	95.6	96.4	96.1	95.9	96.4
Hillingdon	95.0	95.7	95.0	95.6	96.5	95.2	95.2
Hounslow	91.9	91.4	93.4	94.0	93.9	93.8	93.0
Kingston upon Thames	93.9	91.9	93.7	94.0	95.9	96.5	96.6
Merton	95.5	95.1	95.2	95.7	95.6	96.5	96.6
Newham	82.0	83.1	83.3	84.9	86.8	90.0	91.0
Redbridge	96.1	96.1	95.7	95.5	95.7	95.7	95.6
Richmond upon Thames	97.3	96.2	96.7	97.0	97.6	97.6	97.9
Sutton	97.4	97.0	97.3	97.3	97.3	97.3	98.3
Waltham Forest	91.8	87.8	87.7	88.0	90.6	93.0	89.7
Average Outer London	93.8	93.9	93.7	94.3	94.9	95.0	95.0
Average Greater London	91.8	92.1	92.1	92.8	93.7	94.1	94.1

[1] Amount of council tax due received by the end of the financial year as a percentage of the net collectable debit for the year.

Source:

QRC4 returns

Listed in the following table are the reported council tax collection costs for each London borough and the City of London for each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05.

Council tax collection costs

(£000)

	Outturn						*Budgets*	
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Inner London:								
City of London	301	286	281	270	257	326	481	841
Camden	2,143	2,052	1,737	2,116	2,170	2,323	2,904	2,751
Greenwich	2,460	2,365	2,284	2,330	2,330	2,366	2,541	2,601
Hackney	2,434	1,999	2,180	2,292	4,964	3,984	2,364	2,603
Hammersmith and Fulham	2,009	1,610	1,537	997	1,503	1,348	1,243	940
Islington	1,822	1,786	1,442	156	1,662	2,117	2,375	2,395
Kensington and Chelsea	1,795	1,762	1,839	1,996	1,831	1,719	1,962	1,786
Lambeth	3,932	3,290	3,396	3,245	2,122	2,859	2,276	2,721
Lewisham	2,439	2,543	2,356	2,518	2,522	2,685	5,118	4,016
Southwark	3,276	3,324	3,647	3,482	3,792	4,010	4,280	4,896
Tower Hamlets	2,069	2,435	2,150	2,037	1,951	1,904	1,956	2,180
Wandsworth	1,662	1,685	1,658	1,461	1,771	2,004	2,007	2,002
Westminster	2,265	2,205	2,455	2,190	2,066	2,545	2,584	2,353
Total Inner London	28,607	27,351	26,962	25,090	28,941	30,188	32,091	32,085
Outer London:								
Barking and Dagenham	987	820	869	810	809	861	1,018	1,166
Barnet	1,987	1,711	1,977	1,822	2,040	2,177	2,489	2,730
Bexley	625	548	536	475	515	452	718	376
Brent	2,315	2,199	2,291	3,083	390	291	3,170	2,924
Bromley	1,459	1,465	1,213	1,180	1,221	937	784	835
Croydon	2,909	2,622	2,668	2,933	3,032	2,772	3,683	4,101

Council tax collection costs

(£000)

	Outturn						*Budgets*	
	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Ealing	2,651	2,520	2,635	2,888	3,089	3,370	4,293	4,035
Enfield	2,132	1,697	1,709	1,709	1,789	1,940	1,037	2,524
Haringey	2,571	2,843	2,666	2,534	2,460	2,464	2,888	3,193
Harrow	1,126	1,124	876	860	811	709	673	681
Havering	1,731	2,052	2,627	2,554	1,555	1,965	2,514	2,337
Hillingdon	1,830	1,891	1,865	2,053	2,221	1,737	2,242	2,222
Hounslow	1,717	1,833	1,790	1,678	2,183	2,245	2,338	2,392
Kingston upon Thames	681	741	801	963	985	1,198	1,131	972
Merton	1,662	1,707	1,677	1,856	1,429	1,913	2,213	2,156
Newham	1,622	1,911	1,620	1,398	1,749	1,817	1,705	1,587
Redbridge	2,041	1,994	1,868	1,725	1,800	1,832	1,827	1,482
Richmond upon Thames	1,251	1,170	1,082	1,146	1,001	1,426	1,525	1,627
Sutton	792	681	658	728	860	883	902	977
Waltham Forest	2,367	2,522	2,169	1,879	2,478	3,178	2,968	3,288
Total Outer London	33,566	34,051	33,617	34,274	32,417	34,167	40,118	41,605
Total Greater London	62,173	61,402	60,579	59,364	61,358	64,355	72,209	73,690

Note:

The figures for 2003–04 and 2004–05 differ from those for the earlier years in that they are budget, rather than outturn, figures, and because they also include: *(a)* non-domestic rates collection costs in excess of the allowance made against contributions to the pool; *(b)* the costs of collection of domestic and non-domestic rates due for the period up to 31 March 1990; and *(c)* the costs of collection of community charges. Outturn figures for 2002–03 indicate however, that council tax collection costs accounted for almost 97 per cent. of the combined total nationally.

Source:

RO6 returns (1997–98 to 2002–03) and RA returns (2003–04 and 2004–05)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the total amount of unpaid council tax in each borough in Greater London in each year since 1997. [214566]

Mr. Raynsford: Consistent information on the level of council tax arrears for individual local authorities is not currently available.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the running costs of the Department were in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* electricity, *(b)* water, *(c)* gas, *(d)* telephones, *(e)* mobile telephones and *(f)* televisions. [206682]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established in May 2002. Running costs incurred since that date are in the following table. VAT is included where this is appropriate.

(a) Electricity costs incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04

£000	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister[1]	941	886
QEII Conference Centre	229	330
Total	1,170	1,216

[1] Including Fire Service College and PINS

The increase in electrical consumption is due mostly to a rise in occupational density throughout the estate, which has resulted in increased air conditioning systems and IT equipment use in the buildings.

The energy used in the QEII Conference Centre is dependent on the commercial activities undertaken. Recent refurbishment of the air conditioning systems should improve the Centre's overall efficiency.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is investigating options for reducing energy consumption across the estate. Surveys of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main office buildings are being undertaken and action plans for fuel reduction produced.

(b) Water and sewage costs incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04

	2002–03	*£000* *2003–04*
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	29	32
Agencies	107	121
Total	136	153

(c) Gas costs incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04

£000	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister[1]	357	406
QEII Conference Centre	43	62
Total	400	468

[1] Including agencies.

Increased use of the two gas-fired Combined Heat and Power installations in the HQ estate has also resulted in an increased use of gas. Heating fuel costs have risen by 15 per cent., mainly due to a 9 per cent. increase in gas prices.

(d) Telephony costs incurred by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for the years 2002–03 and 2003–04

£000	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	1,073	1,647
Agencies	N/a	138
Total	1,073	1,785

Information on telephony costs in 2002/03 for agencies of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not available.

For part *(e)* , information on mobile phones used by officials of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

For part *(f)* , in 2003–04, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister spent £19,800 on cable and satellite subscriptions. No figures are available for 2002–03.

This answer excludes the buildings occupied by Government Offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Directors' Awayday

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of his 2004 Office's Directors' Awayday in Southampton. [213500]

Yvette Cooper: The cost of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's 2004 Directors' Awayday in Southampton was £7,901.15. This includes 24-hour full board, meeting room hire and transport costs during the event. The event involved senior staff from across the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister together meeting local authorities and other local and regional stakeholders to discuss the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's delivery issues.

Electoral Fraud

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to minimise the possibilities for electoral fraud; and if he will make a statement. [215002]

Mr. Raynsford: The Government are committed to a programme of electoral modernisation, integral to which is the maintenance and development of safeguards to prevent electoral fraud and maintain the public's confidence in the electoral system. To carry forward this programme, we will continue to encourage local authorities to pilot electoral innovations and to consider carefully the Electoral Commission's evaluations of those pilots.

High Hedges

Mr. Flook: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when local authorities will be able to implement powers within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2004 relating to high hedges. [214618]

Phil Hope: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to bring the powers within the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 relating to high hedges into effect early this year. At that point local authorities will be able to consider complaints about high hedges where the parties are unable to agree a solution.

Before the legislation can be brought into operation, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister needs to put in place Regulations governing certain procedural matters (such as the arrangements for appealing against the local authority's decision) and issue guidance on its practical implementation. We are currently revising the Regulations and guidance in the light of responses to the public consultation carried out last summer.

Household Electrical Supplies

Chris Grayling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes he has made that have not yet come into force to the regulations covering household electrical supplies and systems and those who maintain them; and when such changes will come into force. [215347]

Phil Hope: Safety requirements for electrical installation work in dwellings, introduced as Part P of the Building Regulations, came into force on 1 January 2005. Electrical installation work contracted for or started by 31 December 2004 will not fall within the new requirements so long as it is completed by 31 March 2005.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much in contributions was paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme by employees in England and Wales in each year between 1997 and 2003. [214916]

Phil Hope: The amount of contributions paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme by employees in England and Wales in the seven years between 1997–98 and 2003–04 is tabled as follows.

Contributions paid into the Local Government Pension Scheme by employees in England and Wales between 1997–98 and 2003–04

	Employee contributions (£ million)
1997–98	974
1998–99	1,010
1999–2000	1,067
2000–01	1,131
2001–02	1,214
2002–03	1,311
2003–04	1,426

Source:
ODPM SF3 returns

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of employees in England and Wales who will qualify for retirement under the 85-year rule of the Local Government Pension Scheme in each year to 2015; and what estimate he has made of the number of employees who would be affected by the removal of the 85-year rule in each year. [215066]

Phil Hope: Data in this format and over this time period is not held centrally, nor is it held by the 89 funds which administer the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The 85-year rule is not a qualifying condition which conveys a right to retire. It merely determines whether and to what extent an actuarial reduction to a pension will apply.

An actuarial assessment was made of the overall cost impact of the 85-year rule based on percentage of work force covered by it, and its removal, with transitional protection, produces a saving of some £200 million per year.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many members of the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales retired before the age of 55 in each year since 1997. [215067]

Phil Hope: Details of the actual numbers of retirements from the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales, and the reasons they occurred, are not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Planning

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the effects of the Human Rights Act 1998 on planning enforcement. [214833]

Keith Hill: The Human Rights Act requires local planning authorities, planning inspectors and the Secretary of State, my right. hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, when taking planning decisions, including enforcement decisions, to act compatibly with the rights set out in the European Convention on Human Rights. Each case is decided on its individual merits.

Regeneration

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his aims were for the conference on regenerating UK towns and cities held in Manchester on 31 January. [213871]

Keith Hill: The summit provided an opportunity for over 2,000 delegates and speakers from the United Kingdom and abroad to share ideas and experiences and to build broader and deeper partnerships for delivering sustainable communities.

Regional Assemblies

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time staff are employed in each regional assembly; how much funding from council tax went to each regional assembly in 2003–04; and how much public funding the South West Regional Assembly has received since it was established. [215544]

Mr. Raynsford: Regional Assemblies employed the equivalent of 301.7 full-time staff at the end of March 2004 as detailed in the following table.

Regional assembly	*Staff employed (at end of March 2004)*
East	38.5
East Midlands	21
North East	28
North West	78
South East	32
South West	56
West Midlands	11
Yorkshire and Humber	37.2
Total	301.7

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister made grants totalling £4,814,000 to the South West Regional Assembly from April 2001 to date.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold any information relating to how much council tax funding went to each regional assembly in 2003–04 and it could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Right to Buy (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes have been sold under the right to buy in Pendle in each year since 1990. [214838]

Keith Hill: Annual figures of council right to buy sales for Pendle since 1990–91 as reported by the local authority are tabled as follows.

	Number
1990–91	137
1991–92	51
1992–93	52
1993–94	57
1994–95	50
1995–96	37
1996–97	34
1997–98	28
1998–99	46
1999–2000	64
2000–01	58
2001–02	70
2002–03	112
2003–04	143

Source:
Quarterly returns on council house sales (P1B) from local authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Sand Reserves (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what sand reserves are recorded in the Lancashire Structural Plan; where deposits are located; and what planning guidelines apply to *(a)* sand quarries and *(b)* sand extraction. [214973]

Keith Hill: The draft Replacement Lancashire Structure Plan, due for adoption in March 2005, does not record sand and gravel reserves or future requirements. However, the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, adopted in December 2001, requires the release of 3.2 million tonnes by 2006. The local plan identifies three areas of search, which are:

North and West of Preston;

The Lower Ribble Valley; and

The Leyland-Chorley area.

The returns to the North West Aggregates Working Party for 2003 show that there are 3.54 million tonnes of permitted reserves at the three working sand quarries in the county. The national context for sand extraction is given by Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6, revised in 2004. It sets out a regional apportionment, of which Lancashire's share is 15 per cent., or 8.2 million tonnes.

Planning policy in relation to sand quarries and sand extraction is given at a national level by Minerals Planning Guidance Note 1 (currently being revised as Minerals Planning Statement 1: Planning and Minerals). Sand extraction is covered by MPG 6, referred to above. The draft Replacement Lancashire Structure Plan has a policy (26) on "Provision for working minerals" which covers all aspects of minerals' working in overall terms; more detail is provided by the Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, which contains policies relating to:

Safeguarding Mineral Resources;

Mineral Consultation Areas;

Prior Extraction;

Concurrent Working; and

Conservation of High Qu[illegible]aterial.

Travellers (London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many illegal encampments of Travellers there are on private land within the Greater London area. [215167]

Yvette Cooper: The bi-annual Count of Gypsy and Traveller caravans, which is carried out by local authorities on behalf of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, does not differentiate between unauthorised encampments on public and private land. It does however distinguish between the number of caravans on unauthorised encampments and those on unauthorised developments of Gypsies' own land without planning permission, As at July 2004, the latest date for which published information is available, the number of caravans on unauthorised encampments in the Greater London area was 101, and the number on unauthorised developments was 108.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Properties

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office how many properties are held by the Department; what total floor space these properties provide; how many properties are vacant; and how much floor space vacant properties comprise. [206498]

Mr. Miliband: The total number of properties held by the Cabinet Office as at 1 December 2004 was 41. The total area (net internal area) of all those properties comprised some 84,501 m^2. As at the 1 December 2004 one lease hold property (consisting of 994 m^2) was vacant. The lease on that property has now expired and has not been renewed.

Directgov Website

Mr. Allan: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office if he will publish detailed visitor activity logs for the Directgov website. [214271]

Mr. Miliband: Directgov received over 1.1 million visits in January 2005. Independent usage tracking by "Hitwise" rated Directgov in the top 10 of most visited UK government websites in four of the last six months of 2004.

Traffic figures detailing user activity are published on the eGU website (www.e-government.cabinetoffice.gov.uk) on a monthly basis; these cover the number of users, visits and pages viewed on the Directgov website. A copy of the latest monthly report has been placed in the Library.

TREASURY

Catering Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent on *(a)* entertainment lunches involving civil servants and guests and *(b)* working lunches, in each year since 1997. [215040]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 15 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1084W. The Treasury's accounting system does not differentiate between entertainment lunches and working lunches. All expenditure on official entertainment is made in accordance with published departmental guidance on financial procedures and propriety, based on the principles set out in "Government Accounting".

Credit Unions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will discuss with the Association of British Credit Unions proposals to allow credit unions to set up hardship funds which will allow access to borrowing for those who have no previous history of saving. [214621]

Mr. Timms: The Government will continue to have discussions with the association on a wide range of issues including on the Government's objective to increase the availability of affordable credit to the financially excluded and will certainly consider any proposals which it brings forward.

Departmental Policies (Stockton, South)

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many jobs have been created in Stockton, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215303]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Dari Taylor, dated 9 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about jobs created in Stockton South. I am replying in his absence. (215303)

While statistics of new jobs created are not available explicitly, statistics from surveys enable comparisons to be made of net changes in numbers of jobs from year to year.

The attached table shows the information requested, relating to change in jobs in Stockton South, since 1997 and 2001, compared to 2002, the latest period available.

Number of employee jobs and change in jobs[1,2] in the Parliamentary Constituency of Stockton South: 1997 to 2002

	Number of employee jobs
1997	32,000
1998	31,000
1999	34,000
2000	34,000
2001	36,000
2002	41,000
Change[3] in number of jobs since 1997	9,000
Change[3] in number of jobs since 2001	5,000

[1] Excludes self-employed jobs.

[2] These figures are aggregates from which agriculture class 0100 (1992 SIC) have been excluded.

[3] The change since 1997 and 2001 has been rounded to the nearest thousand separately from rounded levels.

Source:

1997; Annual Employment Survey, rescaled.

1998–2002; Annual Business Inquiry.

EC Pension Liabilities

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the latest estimate is of the UK share of the European Communities' pension liabilities; and how much the UK has contributed. [215277]

Mr. Timms: The United Kingdom contributes to the Community budget as a whole, and not to individual elements of it. For 2003 (the latest year for which we have outturn figures), the amount in the budget for pensions was €755.2 million. The UK's percentage contribution to the overall 2003 budget was 11.92 per cent. after abatement.

EU Budget

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 594W, on the EU budget, if he will make a statement on what additional liabilities arise to the Commission upon failure to discharge the EU budget. [215301]

Mr. Timms: No additional liabilities arise. The Commission's liability under article 276 of the treaty covers all observations of the Council and the European Parliament made during the discharge process, irrespective of whether the budget sector they relate to received a positive statement of assurance.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Cooperation Subcommittee-EEC-Czech Republic met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214742]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Latvia met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215439]

(3) many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Lithuania met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215440]

(4) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Poland met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215441]

(5) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Bulgaria met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215906]

(6) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Estonia met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215907]

(7) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Customs Co-operation Subcommittee—EEC—Hungary met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215908]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not readily available. The Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, Estonia and Hungary are now members of the European Union, the EC Agreements are no longer in place and the Customs Cooperation working groups have been disbanded.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on the European Communities statistics programme met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [214747]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee on monetary, financial and balance-of-payments statistics met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement; [215425]

(3) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the European Advisory Committee on statistical information in the economic and social spheres met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215426]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Angus Robertson, dated 9 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to three of your recent Parliamentary Questions relating to past meetings of various EU Committees. I am replying in his absence. (214747, 215425 & 215426)

The Eurostat Statistical Programme Committee (SPC) met on 17 September 2003 in Paris and 20 November 2003 in Luxembourg during the Italian presidency, 12 February 2004 and 27 May 2004 during the Irish presidency (on both occasions in Luxembourg) and 18 November 2004 in Luxembourg during the Dutch presidency. The UK was represented at all the meetings by appropriate Office for National Statistics (ONS) officials, in most cases the National Statistician. The SPC discusses issues relating to the development of the European Statistical System.

During the Italian presidency, the European Advisory Committee on Statistical Information in the Economic and Social Spheres (CEIES) met on 21 November 2003, and on 19 November 2004 during the Dutch presidency (on both occasions it met in Luxembourg). It did not meet during the Irish presidency. In addition, CEIES organises a series of open thematic seminars on issues of current interest to the European Statistical System. The National Statistician is a member, and was represented by appropriate ONS officials. CEIES maintains a dialogue between producers and users of European statistics.

The EU Committee on Monetary, Finance and Balance of Payment Statistics (CMFB) did not meet during the Italian and Dutch presidencies. During the Irish presidency, CMFB met on 29/30 January 2004 and 15/16 June 2004 (on both occasions in Luxembourg). The UK was represented at both meetings by appropriate ONS and Bank of England officials. The CMFB discusses issues of common interest to central banks and national statistics offices.

EU Fraud

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 31 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 594W, on EU fraud, if he will make a statement on his Department's assessment of the total level of fraud within the European Communities' budget. [215300]

Mr. Timms: The Treasury's estimate that about €185 million, or 0.2 per cent. of the EC budget in 2003, was spent fraudulently, is derived from previous assessments by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) of the likely percentage of fraud within irregularities reported by member states. In response to pressure from the UK and other member states, OLAF's Intelligence Directorate is now beginning to work on a more accurate analysis of how much of the irregularities reported is actual fraud. We welcome and encourage this work, as we believe it is unacceptable that OLAF cannot publish an accurate figure for the amount of fraud against the Community budget. We also need this figure to assess the impact and effectiveness of anti-fraud measures taken to date, and to consider what additional measures should be considered.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Cash: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer from whom the application under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for release of papers relating to the exit of the UK from the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1992 was received; what the reasons are for the delay in responding to the request for the release of the papers; if he will place the papers in the Library; and if he will place in the Library the papers relating to the Government's policy on ERM and economic and monetary union as at 2 May 1997. [215485]

Mr. Timms: No Treasury Minister has had any involvement in the request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which is the subject of the hon. Member's question. This is consistent with the long-standing practice of successive Governments concerning access to documents of a previous Administration. The Permanent Secretary to the Treasury is therefore writing to the hon. Member about this matter.

The Treasury routinely publishes information disclosed under the 2000 Act on its website.

The Government's policy on membership of the single currency was set out by the Chancellor in his statement to Parliament in October 1997. The Treasury assessment of the five economic tests was published in October 1997 and June 2003.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all and (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215225]

Mr. Timms: The answers to all Freedom of Information requests where the material is new or of wider interest are published in the disclosure log on HM Treasury's departmental website. Material that is published on the disclosure log on the website will not normally be placed in the Library.

HIV/AIDS (Africa)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what assessment he has made of the availability of burial space for those dying of HIV/AIDS in Africa; what discussions he has had on this with heads of state of African countries; and what practical measures he has proposed. [R] [214948]

Mr. Timms: No such assessment has been made by the Treasury. During his trip to Africa earlier this year the Chancellor set out how additional development aid could help to tackle HIV and AIDS by increasing treatment and care, while at the same time investing in research on an HIV vaccine.

Make Poverty History Campaign

Llew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the Make Poverty History in 2005 campaign; and what actions he has taken as a result. [215263]

Mr. Timms: In advance of the G7 Finance Ministers meeting the Make Poverty History campaign and its supporters called on the Chancellor for action on debt, aid and trade. At the meeting the G7 Finance Ministers agreed: to provide on a case by case basis as much as 100 per cent. multilateral debt relief for heavily indebted poor countries; a work programme on the IFF and other financing measures and; to ensure that the Doha Round of trade negotiations delivers substantial benefits to developing countries.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214896]

Mr. Timms: The cost of mobile phones is not recorded under a separate accounting code.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many mobile telephones have been reported lost or stolen from the Department in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [214996]

Mr. Timms: For the Treasury, the numbers of mobile phones reported lost or stolen and the estimated costs are one in 2002 at an estimated cost of £200; three in 2003 at an estimated cost of £600; and three in 2004 at an estimated cost of £600.

Departmental Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211664]

Mr. Timms: The core Treasury spending on advertising and publicity, excluding costs of advertising for the purpose of staff recruitment, was as follows:

£000

	Advertising	*Publicity*
1996–97	n/a	n/a
1997–98	0	0
2003–04	0	5
2004–05 (budgeted)	0	10

The data for 1996–97 could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Estimates for future years are not available.

Redundancies (Coventry, South)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many redundancies there have been in Coventry, South in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [214660]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibilities of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 9 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about redundancies. I am replying in his absence. (214660)

The attached table gives estimates of those people made redundant for the twelve month periods ending in February 2002, 2003 and 2004 in Coventry and the West Midlands Metropolitan County. Estimates are from the Labour Force Survey where respondents are asked about whether they have been made redundant in the three months prior to their interview. The Labour Force Survey samples of people made redundant in the Coventry South Parliamentary Constituency were too small to yield any meaningful estimates.

As with any sample survey, estimates from the Labour Force Survey are subject to sampling variability.

People resident in Coventry South parliamentary constituency, Coventry and West Midlands Metropolitan County who were made redundant in last three months

12 months ending February	*Number*
2002	
Coventry South PCA	[1]—
Coventry	1,000
West Midlands Metropolitan County	7,000
2003	
Coventry South PCA	[1]—
Coventry	1,000
West Midlands Metropolitan County	10,000
2004	
Coventry South PCA	[1]—
Coventry	1,000
West Midlands Metropolitan County	5,000

[1] Estimates not shown as they are potentially disclosive.

Note:

These estimates are based on very small sample sizes and are subject to a very high degree of sampling variability. Changes from year to year, especially, should be treated with caution.

Source:

ONS Labour Force Survey

Euro

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps have been taken by ECOFIN ministers to facilitate business recognition in the UK of the euro. [215201]

Mr. Timms: The Government continues, in consultation with business, to make information available to help UK business consider the practical and strategic implications of the euro for their business. An update of this work was published in Chapter 3 of the "Report on euro preparations, December 2004", available in the House of Commons Library. All the material published by the Treasury to help UK business is available on the Treasury's euro website www.euro.gov.uk and can be ordered in hard copy.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the definition of unearned income in the context of the Single Farm Payment Scheme. [214649]

Mr. Timms: For people carrying on a farming trade payments made under the Single Farm Payment Scheme will generally be classified as "earned income", in the same way as their other trading income. For others, payments under the scheme may be classified as "unearned income", because the scheme provides for payments to people who are not carrying on a trade.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the speeches his special advisers made in an official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004, broken down by date. [210558]

Mr. Timms: No central records are held. All speeches given by special advisers are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many overpayments of *(a)* child tax credit and *(b)* working tax credit have been waived by the Inland Revenue over the period 2003 to 2005; and if he will make a statement; [213929]

(2) what his latest estimate is of the value of tax credit overpayments which have been written off by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 2001–02, *(b)* 2002–03, *(c)* 2003–04 and *(d)* 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [213963]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Aberdeen, South (Miss Begg) on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 129W. For the value of overpayments written off by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 2001–02 and *(b)* 2002–03 I refer the hon. Member to my reply to the hon. Member for Eddisbury (Mr. O'Brien) on 12 November 2003, *Official Report*, column 394W.

The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out its approach to handling overpayments of tax credits, including those cases where the overpayment was a result of official error.

The value of overpayments of working tax credit and child tax credit that have been written off due to official error between their introduction and end of December 2004 is around £1.3 million.

I also refer the hon. Member to paragraph 2.10 of the Comptroller and Auditor General Report and page 124 of the Inland Revenue Annual Report and Accounts 2004.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what problems have been experienced in the administration of the working families tax credit in Northern Ireland in the last 12 months; and what assessment he has made of whether recipients have suffered hardship. [214528]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 February 2005]*: The Inland Revenue is not aware of any tax credits administration problems specific to Northern Ireland.

The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out its approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

Where the Inland Revenue identifies an overpayment after the end of the year, it collects it from a continuing award, wherever possible, subject to automatic limits, which are applied after a claimant's award for the current year has been calculated.

Claimants can contact the Inland Revenue if the reduced payments cause hardship, or they think a possible overpayment should not be recovered—they will consider whether to make additional payments for the rest of the year.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what grounds the Inland Revenue will remit tax credit overpayments in instances where they have not acted upon information received within 30 days. [215186]

Dawn Primarolo: The Inland Revenue's Code of Practice 26 ("What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?") sets out its approach to handling overpayments of tax credits.

A claimant will not be asked to pay back an overpayment where it was caused by a mistake by the Inland Revenue and it was reasonable for the claimant thinking their award was right. Where the Inland Revenue has made a mistake and does not act on information provided by a claimant within 30 working days and it was reasonable for the claimant to think their award was correct, it will not ask for an overpayment to be paid back.

Mr. Tyler: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Aberdeen, South (Miss Begg) of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 129W, on tax credits, in how many cases concerning the 1,600 people who have had their tax credit overpayments written off on grounds of official error, the Inland Revenue had failed to act upon information received within 30 days. [215334]

Dawn Primarolo: This information requested is not available. The Inland Revenue does not keep separate records of those cases where an overpayment has been written off on grounds of official error.

Taxation

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people he estimates faced combined marginal tax and benefit deduction rates of *(a)* over 50 per cent., *(b)* over 60 per cent. and *(c)* over 70 per cent. in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05; what estimate he has made of the figures for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [214812]

Dawn Primarolo: Forward-looking estimates of numbers of working households facing high marginal deduction rates have been published each year in the Budget and pre-Budget reports. Each estimate is based on the best information and methodology available at the time, but the numbers published in different reports are not necessarily comparable.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of reducing marginal deduction rates for taxes and benefits to 50 per cent. or less for all those on tax credits; and if he will make a statement. [214813]

Dawn Primarolo: Marginal deductions rates depend on the combined impact of income tax, national insurance contributions, tax credits, housing benefit, council tax benefit and, for some people working fewer than 16 hours a week, also on income support and jobseeker's allowance. It is not possible to calculate the cost of guaranteeing that nobody receiving tax credits faced marginal deductions rates above a particular level without making detailed assumptions on changes to each of these factors.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will re-state Table 4.2, page 88, of the November 2004 pre-Budget report (Cmnd 6408) to include figures for the marginal deduction rates of over 50 per cent. and if he will make a statement. [214815]

Dawn Primarolo: The table shows estimates of the numbers facing marginal deduction rates (MDRs) in excess of 50 per cent:

Marginal deduction rate (percentage)	*Before budget 1998*	*2005–06 system of tax and benefits*
Over 100	5,000	0
Over 90	130,000	45,000
Over 80	300,000	195,000
Over 70	740,000	275,000
Over 60	760,000	1,715,000
Over 50	760,000	1,865,000

Figures are cumulative. This table shows marginal deduction rates for working households in receipt of income related benefits or tax credits, where at least one person works 16 hours or more a week and where higher earnings would lead to reduced benefits or tax credits. They include the marginal effects of income tax and national insurance contributions, and the withdrawal of housing benefit and council tax benefit.

This analysis does not take into account the way in which the new tax credits will respond to rises in income. The new tax credits only respond to rises in income in the current year of more than £2,500, disregarding the first £2,500 of any risk. This means that recipients will not see their tax credits reduced as soon as their income rises, so reducing the effective marginal deduction in any one year.

As a result of the Government's reforms, almost half a million fewer low-income households now face marginal deduction rates in excess of 70 per cent. than did so in April 1998. The increase in the number of households facing marginal deduction rates of between 40 and 70 per cent. is primarily due to the introduction of tax credits, and more recently the extension of support to workers aged 25 or over without children.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Benefits and Allowances

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province were receiving *(a)* disability living allowance, *(b)* incapacity benefit and *(c)* severe disablement allowance in the last period for which figures are available. [215364]

Mr. Spellar: The figures shown in the following table are the payload of the benefits requested. That is those who are receiving benefit, this excludes people with entitlement where payment has been suspended for example, because they are in hospital.

Benefit	*Date*	*Number of people*
Disability living allowance	November 2004	164,067
Incapacity benefit	August 2004	70,608
Severe disablement allowance	August 2004	13,189

Child Support Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time taken by the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency is in respect of new applications under the new child support scheme to *(a)* acknowledge applications for child support, *(b)* issue maintenance enquiry forms to non-resident parents, *(c)* issue an interim maintenance assessment and *(d)* issue a final maintenance assessment; and if he will provide disaggregated figures to show the respective performance of the (i) Northern Ireland operations and (ii) Eastern Business Unit. [208569]

Mr. Spellar: It has not been Child Support Agency practice to acknowledge receipt of applications because of the sheer volume of material and its constantly changing nature. I have asked my officials in the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency to consider whether some form of acknowledgement would be practicable.

Information on the average time taken to issue maintenance enquiry forms to non-resident parents is not held. Again I have asked my officials in the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency to review the adequacy of management information.

Under the new child support scheme there are no interim maintenance assessments. The average time taken for a case to reach calculation is 15 weeks for Northern Ireland cases and 20 weeks for Eastern Business Unit.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many telephone calls were made to the customer help line of *(a)* the Eastern Business Unit and *(b)* the Northern Ireland Operations of the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency (i) in 2003–04 and (ii) in 2004–05 to date; and how many such calls were abandoned. [208573]

Mr. Spellar: The information is as follows:

Eastern Business Unit

In 2003–04 around 770,000 telephone calls were received in the part of the Child Support Agency's national helpline that is situated in Belfast. Many of these calls represent the same customer redialling because of delays in making a connection. In 2003–04 around 350,000 of these calls were abandoned. We considered this performance unacceptable and invested additional resources in the National Helpline. The year-to-date figures for 2004–05 are around 800,000 received and around 170,000 abandoned. Against the Agency's target of "no more than 20 per cent. of telephone calls to be abandoned" Eastern Business Unit's year to date performance is 20.19 per cent. Work is continuing in this area to further improve performance.

Northern Ireland Operations

In 2003–04 there were around 86,000 telephone calls to the Northern Ireland customer help line and around 15,000 abandoned calls. The year to date number of calls in 2004–05 is around 87,000 and the number of abandoned calls is around 14,500. Against the Agency target of "no more than 20 per cent. of telephone calls to be abandoned" the Northern Ireland year to date performance is 16.8 per cent.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213813]

Mr. Paul Murphy: The Northern Ireland Office (excluding its agencies and NDPBs) has spent the following since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme:

(a) Congestion charges: £1,410

(b) Penalty charge notices: Nil

Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vacancies there are in community dentistry in the Province. [212179]

Angela Smith: Information requested is provided in the table.

Number of vacancies in community central services in Northern Ireland as at January 2005

Grade	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Health Promotion	1	0.60
Medical Technical Officer 3	1	0.80
Dental Nurse	1	1.00
Senior Dental Nurse[1]	2	2.00
Dental Officer[1]	3	1.61
Senior Dental Officer	2	1.30
Total	10	7.31

[1] Interviews have taken place and appointments offered for 1 Senior Dental Nurse (1.00 WTE) and 2 Dental Officers (1.41 WTE)

Source:

NI Health Boards

Eating Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will estimate the cost of treating Northern Ireland eating disorders sufferers outside the Province in each of the last five years; [212183]

(2) if he will estimate the cost of treating eating disorders sufferers from Northern Ireland outside the Province in each of the last five years. [215370]

Angela Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Estimated costs of treating Northern Ireland eating disorders sufferers outside the Province

Year ending 31 March	*Estimated expenditure (£000)*
2004	1,001
2003	754
2002	608
2001[1]	220
2000[1]	129

[1] Information on the numbers treated for these financial years is not available from the Northern Health and Social Services Board and therefore it is not possible to estimate their expenditure to include in the total.

Source:

Health and Social Services Boards

Health Care Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what actions are taken to inform health service employers of potential employees who have been forced to leave other posts within the health sector and the reasons surrounding their departure. [215362]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1069W.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland under what circumstances police checks are conducted on applicants for *(a)* permanent and *(b)* agency health care staff posts. [215363]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 876W.

Health Service (Fraud)

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement regarding losses from fraud affecting the health service in the Province. [215373]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 875W.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what reports of counterfeit medications being discovered in the Province within the legitimate wholesale medicines supply chain he has received in the last three years. [215374]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1068W.

Housing Executive

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which posts, not including Housing Executive staff, are funded by the Housing Executive to assist local communities and residents' groups in North Belfast. [211965]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive encourages the development of local groups to assist in the furthering of its housing responsibilities and has funded the following posts either fully or in part in the North Belfast area:

New Lodge Housing Forum—Community Project Worker

Ardoyne—Community Project Worker

Lower North Belfast Community Council—Housing and Environmental Officer

North Belfast Partnership Board—Housing and Environmental Officer

Concerned Residents Upper Ardoyne—Community Project Worker

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the policy of the Housing Executive is in respect of the letting of properties to commercial lessees. [211966]

Mr. Spellar: The Housing Executive's policy is generally to retain ownership of its Purpose Built Commercial Property Portfolio with the exception of those shop units or centres where it makes good economic sense to sell.

In considering the sale of any of its purpose-built commercial properties the Housing Executive must be satisfied that:

(i) the sale makes good economic sense (eg where there are structural problems or onerous repairs); or is necessary because of the special circumstances attaching to the case;

(ii) the sale would not be to the detriment of the needs of its domestic tenants.

Units are sometimes let to local community-based organisations, charities and government agencies to provide locally based services.

Vacant properties are advertised for leasing on an open market basis and are generally let on a five-year lease with a provision to review rents every five years.

Mental Health

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province provide cognitive behavioural therapy within the NHS for those suffering depression and anxiety. [212165]

Angela Smith: There are 90 clinical psychologists in Northern Ireland working in the national health service and trained in cognitive behavioural therapy. Also it is one of the therapeutic approaches used by other disciplines such as psychiatric nurses. However, cognitive behavioural therapy is effective and used for a wide range of mental health problems and therefore it would be difficult to quantify how many are providing therapy specifically for depression and anxiety.

Speech Defects (Social Security)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what allowance is made for claimants in Northern Ireland who have speech defects, when such defects result in errors regarding social security payments for which repayment is demanded, when determining the level and extent of repayment. [213974]

Mr. Spellar: The Social Security Agency is committed to providing the highest standard of customer care to all clients groups which includes customers with a disability.

If it is apparent that a customer has a speech defect, all possible assistance (including the use of private interview facilities) is given to meet the customer's specific needs and to minimise the risk of gathering inaccurate information.

If a customer is dissatisfied with the outcome of a decision he or she can exercise his or her right of appeal.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since 1997. [213668]

Mr. Paul Murphy: A number of internal staff surveys were completed by staff within the Department. These were conducted as part of normal duties and no records were held of staff time expended separately on these surveys. It is not possible therefore to provide details of the cost of staff surveys in the Department for each year since 1997.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since 1997. [213669]

Mr. Paul Murphy: Two staff surveys were conducted as part of a wider project. The cost of these surveys were not detailed separately but were included in the overall cost of the consultancy. Individual survey costs could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Trauma Counsellors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many specialist trauma counsellors are working in the Province. [212184]

Angela Smith: There are 28 specialist trauma counsellors directly employed by Northern Ireland trusts although the majority of these will not be providing a full-time dedicated trauma service. In addition, a range of practitioners including medical staff, psychologists, cognitive therapists, community psychiatric nurses, social workers and sessional counsellors also provide trauma counselling. A range of statutory and voluntary organisations, from which services are commissioned, also employ specialist trauma counsellors but there are no figures available on the number.

Waiting Lists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province died while *(a)* on waiting lists for (i) in-patient admission and (ii) initial out-patient assessment and *(b)* awaiting medical investigations in each of the last five years. [215379]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Wind Farms

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many wind farms were in operation in Northern Ireland at the end of 2004; what their total output was on 31 December; and what percentage of the total electricity supply in Northern Ireland that figure represents. [214273]

Mr. Gardiner: At the end of 2004 there were 14 wind farms operating in Northern Ireland which produced 220GWh of electricity in total, equivalent to 2.5 per cent. of the total electricity consumed in Northern Ireland during 2004.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for new wind farms in Northern Ireland have been accepted; and what estimate he has made of the percentage of the total electricity supply in Northern Ireland which they will provide. [214274]

Mr. Gardiner: During the past 12 months Department of the Environment Planning Service approved applications for four wind farms, all of which have yet to commence generation. The total estimated capacity of these farms is 66MW which should be capable of supplying around 175GWh to the Northern Ireland electricity grid each year, equivalent to 2 per cent. of total annual electricity consumption (2004 figures).

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Departmental Policies (Burnley)

Mr. Pike: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214703]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crown Court trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates' courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

The range of the Department's policies and actions is wide and the statistical information relating to all of that activity is not collected on a constituency basis. Consequently, the information requested in the question cannot be provided in the form requested except at a disproportionate cost. However, statistical information about the Department's activities can be found at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statfr.htm as well as at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk.

An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 59 days in the Lancashire criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Burnley. This compares with 124 days in the Lancashire criminal justice area in the 1997 calendar year.

Constitutional Treaty

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1028W, on the Constitutional Treaty, with which individuals discussions took place; on what dates; and if he will publish notes and minutes of the meetings and internal memoranda produced consequent to the meetings. [211430]

Mr. Leslie: The information requested relates to the formulation and development of government policy on the holding of a referendum in relation to the European Union Constitution. The European Union Bill is still proceeding through Parliament. It is essential that the Government and the Electoral Commission remain able to fully and frankly engage in ongoing discussion and debate in relation to a policy that remains the subject of active ongoing consideration. If the Government were to disclose the information requested it would prejudice this process. We currently have no plans therefore to disclose the information which the hon. Member requests.

Courts (Sitting Hours)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will make a statement on the current sitting hours of courts. [214403]

Mr. Leslie: Tables showing county, Crown and magistrates courts sitting hours follow.

The downward trend in sitting hours in the county court since 2001 reflects the increased use of judicial case management. Greater access to alternative dispute resolution continues to have an effect on the number of cases that reach a settlement, which in turn has impacted on the level of court sitting hours.

The number of sitting hours in the Crown court has gone up, as the sitting plan has been increased year on year.

The historical sitting hours for magistrates courts show a gradual increase in the number of hours sat for criminal proceedings, although overall hours are subject to seasonal variation. Civil and other court user hours have remained relatively stable.

Sitting hours in county courts: England and Wales 2000 to 2004 Q3

Quarter	*Total number of hours sat (in quarter)*
2000	
Q1	50,838
Q2	44,459
Q3	45,689
Q4	47,361
Total	188,347
2001	
Q1	47,334
Q2	54,840
Q3	45,540
Q4	45,874
Total	193,586
2002	
Q1	43,884
Q2	43,458
Q3	43,130
Q4	46,487
Total	176,958
2003	
Q1	47,381
Q2	41,376
Q3	43,664
Q4	42,895
Total	175,315
2004	
Q1	44,711
Q2	38,796
Q3	38,594

Sitting hours in Crown courts: England and Wales 2000 to 2004

Quarter	*Total number of hours sat (in quarter)*
2000	
QT1	107,150
QT2	94,629
QT3	95,660
QT4	102,617
Total	400,057
2001	
QT1	111,281
QT2	102,238
QT3	103,532
QT4	109,924
Total	426,975
2002	
QT1	112,588
QT2	104,822
QT3	109,458
QT4	112,195
Total	439,063
2003	
QT1	116,757

Sitting hours in Crown courts: England and Wales 2000 to 2004

Quarter	*Total number of hours sat (in quarter)*
QT2	102,815
QT3	107,892
QT4	109,159
Total	436,622
2004	
QT1	119,427
QT2	104,555
QT3	108,242
QT4	110,943
Total	443,167

Sitting hours in magistrates courts: England and Wales 2000 Q3 to 2004 Q3

	Number of hours sat (in quarter)			
Quarter	*Criminal*	*Civil*	*Other court users*	*Total*
2000				
Q3	263,480	26,779	4,507	294,766
Q4	266,504	27,253	8,396	302,152
Total	529,984	54,032	12,903	596,918
2001				
Q1	277,249	27,559	9,179	313,987
Q2	262,159	26,900	10,228	299,286
Q3	259,676	27,415	9,458	296,548
Q4	257,387	26,201	10,603	294,191
Total	1,056,471	108,074	39,467	1,204,012
2002				
Q1	268,362	25,767	12,850	306,979
Q2	260,836	24,937	13,801	299,575
Q3	270,054	25,583	13,645	309,282
Q4	262,318	25,089	13,034	300,441
Total	1,061,570	101,376	53,331	1,216,277
2003				
Q1	272,114	25,897	12,016	310,027
Q2	265,471	23,882	10,407	299,760
Q3	278,232	25,970	12,084	316,286
Q4	269,240	25,826	10,786	305,852
Total	1,085,057	101,575	45,293	1,231,925
2004				
Q1	286,208	26,131	10,018	322,357
Q2	272,187	24,221	9,129	305,537
Q3	277,616	24,266	8,812	310,694

Note:

These data are presented as calendar year not financial year.

Source:

MCAD Access Databases

Divorced/Separated Parents

Keith Vaz: what the reasons were for the decision not to make negotiation compulsory in disputes between divorced or separated parents. [210230]

Mr. Leslie: *[pursuant to the reply, 27 January 2005, Official Report, c.459W]:* The Government published 'Parental Separation: Children's Needs and Parents' Responsibilities, Next Steps' on 18 January, which sets out plans to implement a range of measures to help separating parents in dispute about future parenting arrangements, reach agreement.

The Government's plans include improvements in the information available to parents and greater use of methods such as the Collaborative Law Model, Mediation, In-Court Conciliation and the Family Resolutions Pilot Project. The Government intends strongly to promote these methods as better ways to reach agreement than through contested court hearings. All publicly funded clients will have to show that they have considered mediation. Lawyers undertaking collaborative law work in the proposed pilot will be publicly funded, if their clients are eligible. Those same lawyers would not be funded by legal aid for any subsequent litigation if an out of court settlement is not reached under the Collaborative Law Scheme and the case proceeded to court. New lawyers would need to be instructed for the court proceedings and they would be funded separately, subject to their clients' eligibility. In addition, the Government, Senior Judiciary and Rules Committee plan to review court rules and practice directions so that the strongest possible encouragement is given to parties to participate in forms of dispute resolution.

We do not plan to make these schemes compulsory in every case, as an essential part of the process is that people come to them voluntarily and are therefore willing to participate. Further, in some cases, including those where domestic violence has been an issue, it would not always be appropriate to impose mediation on separating parents.

Electoral Registration (Service Personnel)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many British service personnel registered as overseas electors in *(a)* 2001, *(b)* 2002, *(c)* 2003 and *(d)* 2004. [215284]

Mr. Leslie: As a result of provisions in the Representation of the People Act 2000, service personnel have been entitled to register to vote by completing a service declaration, as previously, or alternatively as either ordinary or overseas voters. It is not possible to identify separately those overseas electors who may also be service personnel.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many service personnel have been prosecuted for failure to register on the electoral rolls, in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (S.I., 2001/341) since February 2001. [215333]

Mr. Leslie: Regulation 23 of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 provides that an electoral registration officer may require any person to give information required for the purposes of that officer's duties in maintaining electoral registers. It is an offence for any person to fail to comply with, or to give false information in respect of such a request. Figures are not collected centrally in respect of prosecutions arising from these provisions, for any category of elector.

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether all service personnel overseas voters have received a written reminder of their obligation to re-register on the electoral roll in accordance with Clause 25(2) of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 (SI, 2001/341). [215487]

Mr. Leslie: Regulation 25(2) of the Representation of the People (England and Wales) Regulations 2001 requires electoral registration officers to send annually a written reminder to service personnel who are registered by way of a service declaration of the need to make a fresh declaration if they wish to remain registered under this method. The reminder is sent to the address at which such personnel are recorded as being most recently resident. Service personnel who are registered as ordinary voters in respect of an address in the United Kingdom will be sent an annual canvass form to be completed and returned to the relevant electoral registration officer.

Judicial Appointments

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time judicial officer appointments have been made in each year since 1975. [215189]

Mr. Leslie: The number of full-time judicial officer appointments between the calendar years 1975 to 1997 is detailed in the following tables 1A and B. The tables include lay magistrates appointments from 1990 onwards.

The figures for the appointment of part-time judicial officers between 1975 and 1998, and for lay magistrates prior to 1990 are not given as they could be determined only at disproportionate cost.

The numbers of full-time and part-time judicial officer appointments for each year between 1998 and 2004 are set out in table 2. These figures are obtained from the Judicial Appointments Annual Reports to Parliament for each of the financial years from 1998 to 2004.

Table 1A: 1975 to 1984—Full-time appointments

	Number
1975	45
1976	46
1977	43
1978	57
1979	39
1980	65
1981	10
1982	10
1983	48
1984	62

Table 1B: 1985 to 1994—Full-time and lay magistrates appointments

	Full time	Lay magistrates
1985	53	n/a
1986	82	n/a
1987	54	n/a
1988	60	n/a
1989	54	n/a
1990	55	2,059
1991	92	2,017
1992	120	2,070
1993	127	2,062
1994	91	1,593
1995	110	1,843
1996	100	1,682
1997	93	1,573

Table 2: 1998-99 to 2003-04—Full-time, part-time (fee paid) and lay magistrates appointments

	Full time	Part time	Total	Number of lay magistrates
1998-99	148	486	634	1,609
1999-2000	95	369	464	1,423
2000-01	198	555	753	1,618
2001-02	125	790	915	1,786
2002-03	156	541	697	1,623
2003-04	126	354	480	1,478

HEALTH

Alcohol

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much his Department has spent advertising the dangers of excessive alcohol in each of the last seven years. [213059]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Since 2002, the Department has funded through its central communications budget the production of the following booklets or leaflets advising the public on sensible drinking:

"Drinking for two", relating to drinking during pregnancy.

"Alcohol Facts for Parents & Young People" flip book.

"Think About Drink".

Drinkline leaflet (Drinkline is a national telephone helpline that helps people with a drink problem and their families).

"Say When—How Much Is Too Much?"

Two leaflets have been produced for specific communities:

"Your Drink and You", for the Caribbean community.

"Alcohol—the facts", an Asian multilingual booklet.

Expenditure for these publications is shown in the table.

	Amount (£)
2002-03	96,764
2003-04	44,591
2004-05[1]	39,954

[1] Up to and including quarter three.

Additionally, the Department funds the Drinkline helpline and a dedicated website at http://www.patient.co.uk/showdoc/26738981/.

Ambulance Services (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long on average people waited for ambulances responding to 999 calls in Chorley in the last year for which figures are available; and how many times the target response time was missed during that period. [212041]

Miss Melanie Johnson: This information is not collected centrally. Response time data for the Lancashire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust for 2003–04 is available in the KA34 statistical bulletin. Copies are available in the Library.

In 2003–04, Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust made 735,100 patient journeys, received 142,900 emergency calls and attended 136,100 emergency incidents. 77.7 per cent. of category A (immediately life-threatening) calls were responded to within eight minutes. 95.3 per cent. of category B/C (less urgent) calls were responded to within 19 minutes. 96.4 per cent. of general practitioner urgent journeys reached their destination not more than 15 minutes late.

Burns Treatment

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to enhance specialist burns treatment facilities in the south-east region; and if he will make a statement. [213122]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* The National Burn Care Group, which is considering options for reconfiguration of specialist burns services across England and Wales, is being led by the national health service.

Decisions have not yet been made regarding the development of burn care centres; any proposals for change will be submitted to a full public consultation process, probably in the summer of 2005.

Cancer Research/Services

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by his Department on cancer research in each of the last seven years. [210572]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The information requested is shown in the table.

	£ million
1997–98	53
1998–99	75.4
1999–2000	77.4
2000–01	83.8
2001–02	143.4
2002–03	124.1
2003–04	139.8

Over 75 per cent. of the Department's total expenditure on health research is devolved to and managed by national health service organisations. The figures given include estimates of the expenditure incurred by those organisations for the years 1997–98 to 2000–01, and the actual expenditure reported by them for the years from 2001–02.

Ms Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how the additional cancer funding announced on 30 September 2008 has been spent; [213482]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to address shortfalls consequent on the funding cap on voluntary hospices. [213483]

Miss Melanie Johnson: My right hon. Friend the Member for Darlington (Mr. Milburn) announced in September 2003 the allocation of an additional £50 million per annum for specialist palliative care (SPC). The extra funding met the Government's commitment in the NHS Cancer Plan 2000 and represents a significant increase in national health service funding of about 40 per cent. over 2000 levels.

Reports on the use of the additional £50 million in 2003–04 have been received from 32 of the 34 cancer networks. The remaining two networks received their allocations later than the others and were not included in this information collection exercise. The 32 networks received a total of £45.8 million and spent £38.4 million of this amount in-year on specialist palliative care. Because of a lack of suitable staff to fill posts within the first year of the budget, £7.4 million has been carried forward for use in future years.

£24.8 million of the £38.4 million was used to support voluntary sector services, including hospices, of which £8.5 million was for new services, and £13.6 million of the £38.4 million was used to support NHS services, of which £10.2 million was for new services.

To date, the allocation has funded 28 new whole-time equivalent (WTE) consultants in palliative medicine, 133 new WTE clinical nurse specialists and the opening of 38 new SPC beds.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible within the NHS for commissioning and funding services for their resident population, including palliative care. The NHS is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history, growth money not identified for specific purposes. PCTs will be able to use these extra resources to deliver on both national and local priorities, including, as they determine, palliative care. There are no restrictions on the levels of funding possible for hospices. It is for individual hospices to negotiate funding with their PCT.

Care Homes (Derbyshire)

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* care homes and *(b)* care home places were available in West Derbyshire in each of the last seven years run by (i) Derbyshire county council and (ii) the voluntary independent and private sector. [211916]

Dr. Ladyman: Data is not available for the area requested. Table 1 shows the number of care homes for adults aged 18 and over in Derbyshire at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001. Table 2 shows the number of care home places for adults aged 18 and over in Derbyshire at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001.

I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) that figures for later years were collected by the National Care Standards Commission, and now CSCI, but comparable details are not available.

Table 1: Number of care homes in Derbyshire[1] 1997–2001

Rounded numbers

	Local authority	*Residential private*[2]	*Voluntary*	*Nursing*[3] *independent*	*Total*
1997	70	280	40	150	540
1998	50	230	40	150	480
1999	50	320	50	150	560
2000	50	240	40	140	470
2001	50	240	40	140	470

Table 2: Number of care home places in Derbyshire[1] 1997–2001

Rounded numbers

	Local authority	*Residential private*[2]	*Voluntary*	*Nursing*[3] *independent*	*Total*
1997	1,780	3,790	700	4,600	10,860
1998	1,490	3,780	690	4,500	10,400
1999	1,380	4,460	770	4,590	11,200
2000	1,470	4,230	630	4,310	10,630
2001	1,470	4,190	590	4,260	10,510

[1] Nursing relates to North Derbyshire and South Derbyshire health authorities. Residential care relates to Derbyshire council with social services responsibilities (CSSR) and Derby CSSR.

[2] Includes private and small residential care homes.

[3] Includes general nursing homes, mental nursing homes and private hospitals and clinics. These figures also include dual registered homes that are registered with both the local authority to provide residential care and the health authority to provide nursing care.

Source:

RA and RH(N) form A.

Cataract Services

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on steps taken to reduce cataract treatment waiting lists. [210109]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 24 January 2005]:* By the end of January 2005, waiting times for cataract operations had been reduced to a maximum of three months and most patients can now expect to be treated within six weeks. This is four years ahead of the NHS Plan target. This is a result of sustained investment and reform in national health service services, including extra capacity supplied by the independent sector, which has so far provided over 13,000 additional cataract operations.

Childhood Cancer

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of links between levels of chemicals revealed in the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory and levels of childhood cancer. [215064]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* The committee on carcinogenicity of chemicals in food consumer products and the environment (COC) will assess the recent publication from Professor E. G. Knox (University of Birmingham) on childhood cancers and atmospheric carcinogens, which was based on data from the National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory, at its next meeting on 21 April 2005. This will be part of an ongoing review the COC is undertaking into chemicals and childhood cancers.

Congestion Charge

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on congestion *(a)* charges and *(b)* penalty charge notices by the Department since the commencement of the congestion charging scheme. [213816]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department's expenses guide allows staff to claim for the reasonable cost of additional motoring expenses, such as car parking, tolls, ferries and the congestion charge. The guide prohibits the payment of any penalties such as parking fines, speeding tickets and penalty charge notices incurred on official business.

Expenditure on the congestion charge is not separately identifiable within the Department's accounting records.

Criminal Offences

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department in the *(a)* 2002–03 and *(b)* 2003–04 session, broken down by Act. [206865]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department sponsored the following legislation, which created the following criminal offences:

Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003

Section 36	making false or reckless declarations in relation to standing or voting at foundation trust elections and meetings.
Section 67	obstructing the exercise by a person authorised by Commission for Health Audit Inspection (CHAI) of powers of entry and inspection and related matters and failure to comply with requirements relating to those powers.
Section 68	failure to comply with requirements imposed by CHAI for the provision of documents, information, records or other items.
Section 69	failure to provide CHAI or an authorised person with an explanation of specified matters.
Sections 73–75	similar provision to those in sections 67–69 in relation to Wales and the Welsh Assembly

Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003

Section 89	obstructing the exercise by a person authorised by Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) of powers of entry and inspection and related matters and failure to comply with requirements relating to those powers.
Section 90	failure to comply with a requirement imposed by CSCI for the provision of documents, information, records or other items.
Section 91	failure to provide CSCI or an authorised person with an explanation of specified matters.
Section 99–101	similar provisions to those in sections 89–91 in relation to Wales and the Welsh Assembly.
Section 136	disclosure of confidential personal information obtained by CHAI
Section 185	this substitutes a new provision for section 13 of the Social Security Act 1988 about welfare foods. It contains a power to provide for social security offences to apply in that context.
Schedule 5	failure to comply with requirements of an auditor of a foundation trust and unauthorised disclosure of information obtained by an auditor or his representative.

The Human Tissue Act 2004

Section 5	breach of prohibition of activities relating to human tissue without consent and misrepresentation in respect of consent, etc
Section 8	breach of restriction of activities in relation to donated human bodies or material from bodies.
Section 25	breach of requirement for licence in respect of various activities relating to human bodies or material from bodies.
Section 30	offences in relation to possession of anatomical specimens away from licensed premises
Section 31	offences in relation to possession of former anatomical specimens away from licensed premises.
Section 32	breach of prohibition of unauthorised commercial dealings in human material for transplantation.
Section 33	breach of restriction on transplants involving a live donor.
Section 34	failure to comply with regulations requiring information about transplant operations.
Section 45	breach of requirements about non-consensual analysis of DNA.
Schedule 5	failure to comply with requirements about powers of inspection, entry, search and seizure, and obstruction in relation to their exercise

Dentistry

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists within the London borough of Wandsworth *(a)* only treat patients under the NHS, *(b)* treat patients under the NHS and also privately and *(c)* treat patients solely as private patients. [214391]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the private work of national health service dentists or of dentists working wholly privately is not available.

There were 158 dentists (general dental service and personal dental service), working in the Wandsworth primary care trust area, as at 31 December 2004.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the differences are between the 2003 Keeping in Touch scheme for dentists and the Returning to Dentistry campaign launched in 2004. [214514]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* The returning to dentistry campaign in 2004 reinforced and expanded the keeping in touch scheme, which is still in operation. Returning to dentistry emphasised opportunities for refresher training, work shadowing, advice on national health service administration and bursary support to assist return to NHS practice.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for how long the Returning to Dentistry campaign ran; how many calls it received; and what the total budget was, broken down by *(a)* advertising and *(b)* operating costs. [214515]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* Advertisements for the Returning to Dentistry campaign ran from the end of June until the end of August 2004. A total of 288 calls were received. The total media budget was £118,669 and the total cost of producing the leaflets was £20,352. The cost of call handling was subsumed within the overall costs of the national health service careers call centre.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions his Department has had with primary care trusts prior to launching the Returning to Dentistry campaign; and what feedback has been received from the trusts as a result of the campaign. [214516]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* The returning to dentistry campaign was launched in June 2004. No formal discussions were held with primary care trusts before the launch. Since April 2004, 65 dentists (37 Whole Time Equivalents) have returned to national health service practice. No direct feedback has been received from trusts as a result of the campaign.

Mr. Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what forecast figures his Department has for *(a)* adults and *(b)* children registering with an NHS dentist in 2005. [206752]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are to recruit the equivalent of 1,000 additional dentists to the national health service by October 2005. This will provide sufficient additional capacity for the dental care of two million more patients. The split between adults and children will vary depending upon the area to which each dentist is recruited and the range of services offered by the dentists already practicing in the area.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many whole-time equivalent dentists have been recruited back to the NHS through the keeping in touch scheme. [209191]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since April 2004, we have been informed of 22.8 whole-time equivalent dentists who have returned to national health service practice via the keeping in touch scheme.

Experimental Crops

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment he has made of the likely impact of draft guidelines published by the United States Food and Drug Administration regarding the regulation of experimental crops on UK *(a)* importers and *(b)* retailers of (i) animal feed and (ii) food intended for human consumption. [211733]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The proposed measures published by the United States Food and Drug Administration impact equally across the European Union. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has raised this issue with the European Commission and other member states, and encouraged the Commission to reply on behalf of the EU. The FSA has not therefore made an assessment of the likely impact of the draft guidelines.

Health Care Trusts (Devon)

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will list the trusts operating in Devon in *(a)* mental health care, *(b)* general health care, *(c)* elderly care and *(d)* special care; which of them were operating in 1997; how many staff are employed by each trust; how many were employed in 1997; and what the costs of running the Health Service in Devon (i) are in 2004–05 and (ii) were in 1997. [214072]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Information relating to the cost of running health services in Devon in 1997 is not held centrally. Information is not held centrally for mental health trusts income turnover.

The running costs for the health service in Devon shown by primary care trust allocations for 2004–05 are shown in table one.

Table 1

Primary care trust	*Allocation (£ million)*
East Devon PCT	115.3
Mid Devon PCT	89.6
North Devon PCT	143.9
South Hams and West Devon PCT	98.1
Plymouth PCT	250.3
Torbay PCT	141.0
Teignbridge PCT	103.1
Exeter PCT	119.0

The latest available data for trust annual income/turnover for 2003–04 is shown in table two.

Table 2

NHS trust	*Income (£000)*
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	69,509
Royal Devon and Exeter Healthcare NHS Trust	199,095
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	129,640
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	241,384

The number of staff employed in trusts providing healthcare for the residents of Devon is shown in tables three and four.

Table 3: Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Staff, General Medical Practitioners and Practice staff for South West Peninsula 1997 and 2003

	1997						
	All NHS staff	*Of which: All Doctors*	*Of which: HCHS staff*	*General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)*	*HCHS non-medical staff*	*GP Practice staff*	*Of which: GP Practice nurses*
South West Peninsula	31,835	2,566	1,500	1,066	26,084	3,185	693
Cornwall Health Care NHS Trust	—	—	56	—	3,148	—	—
North and East Devon Partnerships NHS Trust	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Devon Healthcare Trust	—	—	118	—	2,022	—	—
Plymouth Community Services NHS Trust	—	—	37	—	2,111	—	—
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	—	—	393	—	3,625	—	—
Royal Cornwall Hospitals and West Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust	—	—	268	—	3,018	—	—
Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust	—	—	305	—	2,942	—	—
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	—	—	238	—	4,175	—	—
Trecare NHS Trust	—	—	4	—	710	—	—

Table 4: Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Staff, General Medical Practitioners and Practice staff for South West Peninsula 1997 and 2003

	2003						
	All NHS staff	*Of which: All Doctors*	*Of which: HCHS staff*	*General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)*	*HCHS non-medical staff*	*GP Practice staff*	*Of which: GP Practice nurses*
Southwest Peninsula	40,308	3,346	2,196	1,150	33,163	3,799	795
Cornwall Health Care NHS Trust	2,004	56	56	—	1,948	—	—
North and East Devon Partnerships NHS Trust	2,379	94	94	—	2,285	—	—
North Devon Healthcare Trust	1,838	139	139	—	1,699	—	—

Table 4: Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services (HCHS) Staff, General Medical Practitioners and Practice staff for South West Peninsula 1997 and 2003

	2003						
	All NHS staff	Of which: All Doctors	Of which: HCHS staff	General Medical Practitioners (excluding retainers)	HCHS non-medical staff	GP Practice staff	Of which: GP Practice nurses
Plymouth Community Services NHS Trust	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Plymouth Hospitals NHS Trust	5,540	614	614	—	4,926	—	—
Royal Cornwall Hospitals and West Cornwall Hospital NHS Trust	4,826	448	448	—	4,378	—	—
Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Trust	4,637	396	396	—	4,241	—	—
South Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	3,520	297	297	—	3,223	—	—
Trecare NHS Trust	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Hospital Chaplaincy

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding has been made available for the hospital chaplaincy service for the Sikh faith. [213890]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has undertaken a review of central funding of hospital chaplaincy services informed by extensive consultation with all major faith groups. The review makes a number of recommendations to more equitably provide for the religious and spiritual needs of patients while in hospital. £170,000 is available, which includes funding for the Sikh faith. The Department will publish an action plan shortly.

Infertility Treatment

Mr. Dhanda: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether he expects one cycle of IVF to be available on the NHS to those who meet the clinical criteria by April in *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* England and Wales; [213498]

(2) if he will make a statement on the availability of IVF in Gloucestershire. [213499]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have advised that we will be looking to primary care trusts (PCTs) which provide no in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment to meet a minimum national level of provision of one cycle of IVF by April 2005. In the longer term, we expect the national health service to make progress to full implementation of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence's (NICE) clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment for people with fertility problems. We have said that the priority is to help those in greatest need, which must mean couples who have no children living with them.

We understand that at present the PCTs in Gloucestershire provide IVF in individual cases on exceptional grounds, but that from 1 April 2005 they plan to offer one cycle to those who meet the criteria in the NICE guideline.

Inspectorates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure of the *(a)* Social Services Inspectorate and *(b)* Commission for Social Care Inspection was in each year since its establishment; and what the estimated budget for the next financial year is in each case. [211949]

Dr. Ladyman: Expenditure on the administrative costs of the Social Services Inspectorate since 1997–98 is shown in the table. Earlier figures are not readily available.

The Social Services Inspectorate was part of the Department and was abolished on 1 April 2004, when its functions transferred to the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) along with the social care regulatory functions of the former National Care Standards Commission.

The CSCI's expenditure in 2004–05 is estimated to be some £149.6 million. Its budget for 2005–06 has not yet been determined.

	Total expenditure (£000)
1997–98	6,250
1998–99	6,246
1999–2000	8,189
2000–01	9,227
2001–02	10,248
2002–03	10,532
2003–04	11,697

Milk Tokens

Mr. Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many eligible households *(a)* had and *(b)* had not had their milk tokens issued to them by the last day of each month for which his Department has had responsibility; [211350]

(2) what steps he has taken to satisfy himself that those eligible for milk tokens have *(a)* received a satisfactory service and *(b)* had access to an effective information system; and if he will make a statement; [211351]

(3) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* cost, *(b)* effectiveness and *(c)* management of the Milk Token Hotline; and if he will make a statement; [211352]

(4) for what reasons the Milk Token Hotline ran a message on 22 January advising callers that the Department would not be able to inform them whether they had been instructed to send them more milk tokens until Monday 13 December 2004; if he will arrange for the hotline message to be updated at weekly intervals; what the new target date is for hotline callers to be given accurate information on *(a)* their eligibility for and *(b)* the dispatch of milk tokens; and if he will make a statement. [211371]

(5) pursuant to his answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report,* columns 104–5W, on the Milk Token Hotline, how many calls have been received by the Milk Token Hotline in each week since its commencement; how many callers stayed on the line to seek further assistance; what further assistance was made available to callers between 13 December 2004 and 22 January; and if he will make a statement; [211353]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answers 3 February 2005]:* The token distribution unit (TDU) has been responsible for distributing milk tokens to beneficiaries in receipt of child tax credit since April 2003, and for beneficiaries receiving income support or income based jobseekers allowance since November 2004. The TDU is authorised to send milk tokens to qualifying claimants every four weeks based on information about beneficiaries received from the Inland Revenue and the Department of Work and Pensions. The number of tokens issued in each of the four mail outs since November 2004 is shown in the following table.

Token exchange dates	*Tokens issued to children*	*Tokens issued to pregnant women*
1 November 2004 to 28 November 2004	653,835	29,640
29 November 2004 to 26 December 2004	698,658	28,915
27 December 2004 to 23 January 2005	714,920	28,078
24 January 2005 to 24 February 2005	708,920	27,265

Milk tokens are distributed to eligible households the week before expiry date of the previous four-weekly mail out. This ensures that claimants always receive the tokens before the first Monday of week one of the four-week cycle. Claimants who notify non-receipt of tokens are offered the option to have tokens re-issued or to be sent to a new address if they have recently moved.

Claimants can request information about milk tokens by phone, letter or e-mail and all the contact details are on the letter they receive with the milk tokens. The helpline is supported by trained operators from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. An out-of-hours message also provides a number of options to provide claimants with guidance.

The helpline offers claimants a number of message options for milk token guidance. This has consistently provided the relevant guidance for 70 per cent. of callers since it was established in April 2003. The remaining 30 per cent. select the option to speak to a trained operator. The combination of automated message and operator option provides a cost-effective solution as well as giving beneficiaries immediate access to answers to frequently asked questions.

Since April 2003, the helpline received 385,387 calls. Of these 102,618 claimants selected the option to speak to an operator. Between 13 December 2004 and 22 January 2005, the helpline received 61,216 calls and 18,407 claimants selected the option to speak to an operator.

Since the TDU assumed responsibility for the distribution of milk tokens to income support and jobseekers allowance there has been a large rise in the volume of calls. To help manage this increase, the TDU has installed a new system and has increased the number of trained helpline staff.

The front-end out-of-hours message provides claimants with details of the date on which the TDU will receive the latest set of instructions from the Inland Revenue and Department of Work and Pensions, as well as the date on which they should expect to receive their next set of milk tokens. This message is changed every four weeks. The message about the previous token mail out is kept on the system for two weeks so that claimants who have not received tokens know that they should ask for their tokens to be reissued.

Although the helpline was originally designed for inbound calls only helpline staff have, since November 2004 when the TDU took over responsibility for distribution of tokens to income support and income based jobseeker allowance beneficiaries, been increasingly making outbound calls in order to contact local benefit offices on behalf of claimants to help resolve milk token entitlement queries.

The incorrect message on 22 January, giving guidance about tokens until 13 December, was due to a systems error and this has now been corrected. Daily checks are now made by the TDU to ensure that all messages provide the claimant with current information.

Mobile Diagnostic Centres

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether his Department has received requests from his counterparts in *(a)* the National Assembly for Wales and *(b)* the Scottish Parliament to discuss the use of NHS mobile diagnostic treatment centres. [212218]

Mr. Hutton: 14 mobile treatment centres are run on behalf of the national health service by the independent sector. Two deliver cataract operations and 12 deliver magnetic resonance imaging scans. No direct requests have been received from the National Assembly for Wales or the Scottish Executive to use these facilities.

Mobile Phones

Mr. Win Griffiths: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps he takes to ensure the widespread distribution of guidance his Department publishes on the use of mobile telephones; [214606]

(2) what plans he has to update the leaflet, "Mobile Phones and Health", in the light of the latest study from Sir William Stewart. [214624]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The National Radiological Protection Board publication "Mobile Phones and Health 2004", announced on 11 January by Sir William Stewart, has reviewed progress since the Stewart recommendations nearly five years ago. The new report notes that

> "the main conclusions reached in the Stewart Report in 2000 still apply today and that a precautionary approach to the use of mobile phone technologies should continue to be adopted"

The Government are currently considering the details in the report, which include recommendations about communicating information on health issues relating to mobile phone technology.

MRSA

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment his Department has made of the need for the NHS to set aside contingency funds in case of future civil litigation from patients who have contracted MRSA in hospital; and if he will make a statement. [213472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not made any assessments on the need to set aside a contingency fund for future litigation by patients who have contracted methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) in hospital.

The National Health Service Litigation Authority runs "risk pooling" schemes to indemnify trusts and specific other eligible NHS bodies against civil litigation, including from patients who have contracted MRSA in hospital through a hospital's negligence.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which strains of methicillin-resistant *staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) acute trusts are required to report; and if he will make a statement. [214408]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* The mandatory surveillance system for methicillin resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) collects data on all MRSA bloodstream infections regardless of which strain caused the infection.

NHS Finance

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his estimate is of the annual increase in the NHS budget needed to meet the higher costs associated with *(a)* an ageing population and *(b)* improved healthcare technology; and if he will make a statement. [214362]

Mr. Hutton: Sir Derek Wanless in his report, "Securing our Future Health: Taking a Long Term View", published in April 2002 indicated that the cost impact of increased life expectancy is likely to be small compared with other cost drivers.

In his report, Sir Derek also estimates that medical technology would contribute around three percentage points a year to growth in health spending under the fully engaged scenario.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2002 Budget that the Government accepted the conclusions of the Wanless Review.

NHS IT

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practices in each cluster area have been supplied with new computer systems under the terms of the National Programme for NHS IT. [213454]

Mr. Hutton: To date, 18 general practice sites have been supplied with new computer systems for general practitioners under the national programme for information technology. 17 of these sites are in the programme's London cluster, and the other is in the North East cluster. In addition, the choose and book service, with associated spine components, has gone live in 13 practices across the London, Southern, Eastern, and North East clusters.

The programme's core systems, which will ultimately replace existing clinical systems, are currently under development.

Mr. Allan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital trusts in each cluster area have been supplied with picture archiving and communications systems. [213455]

Mr. Hutton: Picture archiving and communications systems (PACS) are a tried and valuable technology, which is already in use across the national health service. The PACS solution to be provided as a core service from September 2004 under the national programme for information technology is available to all NHS trusts in England. A number of orders have been placed to commence implementation work under the new contracts but no implementations are yet complete. The timescales for implementation vary in each cluster area according to the requirements and state of readiness of each trust.

Portsmouth Hospitals Trust

Mr. Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will delay any contractual commitment by Portsmouth hospitals trust to rebuild Queen Alexandra hospital, Cosham by way of a private finance initiative until he has received the recommendations of the Independent Reconfiguration Panel. [212065]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* No decision has yet been made to refer the recent decision by the Fareham and Gosport primary care trust to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel.

Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board was established; what its annual budget is in 2004–05; how many staff it employs; and how many registrations of consultants have been approved since its inception. [214073]

Mr. Hutton *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* We have made grants of £2.8 million to the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board (PMETB) for 2004–05 and we are now discussing a final payment for the year with them.

As at 31 January 2005, PMETB directly employed 1.4 full-time equivalent substantive staff, had 1.4 full-time equivalent staff on secondment from related organisations, and 16 staff on fixed-term or consultant contracts or employed temporarily through agencies.

PMETB will not take on responsibility for issuing certificates of completion of training for those eligible to apply for consultant posts until its intended launch in September this year. Until then certification remains the responsibility of the Specialist Training Authority of the Medical Royal Colleges as the existing competent authority in this field.

Prescription Charges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the income to be received by his Department from pre-payment certificates for prescription charges in real terms in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, *(c)* 2007–08, *(d)* 2008–09 and *(e)* 2009–10. [203061]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Income from the sale of pre-payment certificates (PPCs) is expected to be around £66 million in 2004–05. Income in future years would depend on the cost of PPCs in each year and the numbers sold, but in real terms, income is likely to at least match the expected income in the current year.

Small/Medium-sized Enterprises

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many research and development procurement opportunities were disseminated by the Department to small and medium-sized enterprises registered through the Small Business Research Initiative in each year since 2001–02 to date; and what the value of such opportunities was in each case. [207012]

Miss Melanie Johnson: All calls for research proposals published by the Department are open to all research providers able to meet the requirements of the brief. Some limitations are imposed in the national programme on new and emerging applications of technology, which funds the development of innovative health and social care products and interventions where there is no commercial sponsor for the technology in its present state of development.

Smoking-related Diseases

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the NHS of treating people with smoking-related diseases; and if he will make a statement. [214060]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* The latest estimate available was made in 1997, when the then Health Education Authority estimated that treating illness and disease caused by smoking costs the national health service up to £1.7 billion every year in terms of general practitioner visits, prescriptions, treatment and operations. (Buck D., Godfrey C., Parrott S., Raw M., University of York Centre for Health Economics, "Cost effectiveness of smoking cessation interventions". Health Education Authority, 1997. A copy is available in the Library.)

Departmental Spending

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213843]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The spend on stationery for each year since 1997 is shown in the table. The Department does not separately identify spend on office supplies.

	Stationery (£)
1997–98	1,868,961
1998–99	1,950,562
1999–2000	1,940,745
2000–01	1,748,090
2001–02	1,775,541
2002–03	1,438,581
2003–04	1,428,683

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total administrative cost of strategic health authorities was in the most recent year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [213960]

Mr. Hutton: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1124–25W.

Unallocated Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213253]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The planned departmental unallocated provision for the Department in 2005–06 is £500 million. Final figures for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are not available yet.

Waiting Lists/Times

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients *(a)* in total and *(b)* per 1,000 of population are on in-patient waiting lists in (i) the Guildford and Waverley primary care trust area, (ii) the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority area and (iii) England. [214198]

Mr. Hutton: The information requested is shown in the table.

In-patient waiting list per 1000 population, November 2004

Organisation	*In-patient waiting list*	*List per 1,000 population*
Guilford and Waverley primary care trust	3,523	15.12
Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority	42,535	16.83
England	832,472	16.87

Notes:

1. Commissioner based monthly waiting time return.
2. Population figures are based on general practitioner lists in April 2003 and have been constrained to the Office for National Statistics 2001 census based mid-year 2002 population estimates.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people waited for out-patient treatment for longer than 13 weeks in each year since 1997 in Worcestershire; and if he will make a statement. [213479]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not available in the format requested.

The table shows the number of people waiting 13 weeks or more for out-patient treatment at National Health Service hospitals in Worcestershire at the end of March for each year since 1996–97.

	Number of people waiting 13 weeks or more
1996–97	622
1997–98	578
1998–99	836
1999–2000	926
2000–01	632
2001–02	973
2002–03	1,673
2003–04	577

Source:
Department of Health

Departmental Policies (Warrington, South)

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what capital projects, detailed by type and cost, have been undertaken at Warrington hospital in each of the last seven years; [211405]

(2) if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Warrington, South constituency, the effects on Warrington, South of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [213763]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Government have put in place a programme of national health service investment and reform since 1997 to improve service delivery in all parts of the United Kingdom. There is significant evidence that these policies have yielded considerable benefits for the Warrington, South constituency.

For example:

At the end of November 2004, the number of people waiting more than nine months for in-patient treatment within Warrington primary care trust (PCT) had fallen to zero, from 856 in June 2002.

At the end of September 2004, the number of patients waiting over 13 weeks for out-patient treatment within Warrington PCT had fallen to 147, from 248 in June 2002.

Figures for December 2004 show that all patients within Warrington PCT are able to be offered an appointment with a primary care professional within two working days, an improvement from 68.4 per cent. in June 2002.

Warrington PCT's financial allocation increased to £179 million for 2004–05, a real terms increase of 6.8 per cent.

In June 2003, at North Cheshire hospitals NHS trust, 92.8 per cent. of patients spent less than four hours in accident and emergency from arrival to admission, transfer or discharge. Figures for September 2004 show an improvement to 96.3 per cent.

Between September 2001 and September 2003, the number of consultants at North Cheshire hospitals NHS trust has increased from 106 to 107. The number of nurses increased from 1,093 to 1,156.

In March 2002, 567, or 86.4 per cent. of patients were seen by a cancer specialist within two weeks. In September 2004, 960, or 99.2 per cent. of patients were seen by a cancer specialist within two weeks.

Replacement computed tomography scanners have been delivered to Warrington district general hospital and Halton general hospital.

A new independent sector treatment centre at Halton hospital, Runcorn, is due to become operational in summer 2006. The centre is expected to carry out an additional approximately orthopaedic surgery procedures annually during a five year period. In addition to the in-patient procedures, the centre will also be carrying out associated out-patient procedures and appropriate diagnostic tests.

£6.3 million investment at the North Cheshire hospitals NHS trust includes the redevelopment of the accident and emergency department at Warrington District General hospital and a minor injuries unit at Halton general hospital. In addition, a new primary care centre will also be developed at Warrington district general hospital.

A £1.9 million heart centre is planned for Warrington district general hospital and is due to be open later this year. Further details of capital projects can be obtained from the North Cheshire hospitals NHS trust.

The Warrington PCT has invested £500,000 on modernising primary and community care. As part of this investment, it will include training specialist staff to undertake a number of specialised services in a community setting, such as taking blood samples, developing nurse-led services to combat heart disease, respiratory illness and orthopaedic services.

( )

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 10 February 2005

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment has been made of the effects of the aircraft carrier programme on funding for other major defence procurement projects. [213136]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence's annual planning process reviews the affordability of all equipment projects and other defence expenditure. This process is not, however, a question of "one programme versus another" but of how best our overall capability priorities can be matched to the resources available. The future carriers remain key elements of our equipment programme.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [211822]

Mr. Ingram: In FY 2002–03 the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) spent £868,818 of its personnel budget in Scotland, this was 0.70 per cent. of the total Dstl personnel budget. In FY 2003–04 Dstl spent £863,586 which was 0.66 per cent. of the total personnel budget.

Defence Service Agencies (Scotland)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre spent in Scotland *(a)* in monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget for that year; how many personnel were employed in Scotland in each case; and if he will make a statement. [215459]

Mr. Ingram: None of the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre personnel budget for each financial year since 1997–98 has been spent in Scotland.

HMS Quorn

Mr. Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for HMS Quorn; and if he will make a statement. [213873]

Mr. Ingram: HMS Quorn is currently undergoing a scheduled period of upkeep at Rosyth, which is expected to complete in the summer, when she will return to full operational duty.

Lancashire Regiment

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* former officers made representations to the Army Board making a decision on the new name for the Lancashire Regiment. [214541]

Mr. Ingram: Last year, the Army considered how best to implement the move to larger regiments and the reduction of four infantry battalions. This involved a wide-ranging and detailed consultation exercise, with the infantry being invited to express their views on how the restructuring should be implemented. Colonels of individual regiments, a number of whom are retired officers, were directly involved in the consultation via the Colonels Commandants of the Divisions of Infantry (who count among their number former, as well as current, Service personnel). The latter were responsible for representing the views of their Divisions to Executive Committee of the Army Board (ECAB); each was invited to address the Committee in person in early December. The Chief of the General Staff also received a small number of letters from retired officers.

The outcome of the ECAB's deliberations, announced on 16 December by the Secretary of State for Defence, included the name of King's, Lancashire and Border Regiment for the new regiment. I am not aware of any hon. Members having made representations to the ECAB; though a number have, of course, expressed their views to Ministers by the usual means.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 376W, on ministerial visits, if he will list the dates of each return flight. [215338]

Mr. Ingram: On the four occasions that the Secretary of State for Defence visited Iraq he flew out of Basra on 23 April 2003, 21 October 2003, 14 June 2004 and 8 December 2004. With the exception of the June 2004 flight, which returned to the United Kingdom, the Secretary of State flew from Basra to other destinations in the Middle East.

RAF Machrihanish

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what radar equipment *(a)* has recently been and *(b)* is planned to be transferred to RAF Machrihanish from other operating RAF bases; and if he will make a statement. [213919]

Mr. Ingram: None.

Rosyth Dockyard

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Rosyth dockyard. [213998]

Mr. Ingram: Rosyth Royal Dockyard has provided a significant element of Royal Navy surface ship refit work for many years and should continue to do so as we move towards a fully competitive programme. While no decisions have been made, Rosyth is one of four yards named in 2003 as having the potential to be involved in the construction and assembly of the new future aircraft carriers.

Targets

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many targets have been set in each year since 1997 by the Department; and, of these, which have been *(a)* met, *(b)* nearly met, *(c)* not met, *(d)* changed and *(e)* dropped. [215797]

Mr. Ingram: The Department's targets and performance against them are set out in the MOD's annual performance reports, copies of which are in the Library of the House.

Typhoon

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the impact of Tranche 2 of the Typhoon on the air defence of the UK. [213908]

Mr. Ingram: Typhoon will represent a major improvement in UK air defence capability compared with the current Tornado F3. The introduction of Tranche 2 Typhoon in addition to the Tranche 1 aircraft will enable the F3 to be phased out by the end of decade.

UK Hydrographic Office

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of its personnel budget the UK Hydrographic Office spent in Scotland in *(a)* monetary terms and *(b)* as a percentage of the total personnel budget in financial year (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2002–03; and if he will make a statement. [214748]

Mr. Caplin: In the financial year 2003–04 the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office spent £89,000 on personnel in Scotland compared to £78,000 in 2002–03. In both years this approximates to 0.3 per cent. of total UKHO personnel costs.

CABINET OFFICE

Lyons Review

Iain Wright: To ask the Minister for the Cabinet Office what representations he has had from Hartlepool in respect of the Lyons Review. [215128]

Mr. Boateng: I have been asked to reply.

Hartlepool Partnership contributed a dossier to the Lyons Review of Public Sector Relocation on 12 September 2003. A submission was also received from Tees Valley Development Company representing the Tees Valley sub-region, which also covers Hartlepool.

PRIME MINISTER

Freedom of Information Applications

Llew Smith: To ask the Prime Minister what applications were made to his office during January under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; what applications were turned down, and for what reasons; what the average cost of discovery and distribution of each such request was; and how many requests were answered within the statutory 20 day period. [214272]

Mr. Miliband: I have been asked to reply.

The Cabinet Office received 532 applications under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, during January 2005. Those requests for which a reply was due by Friday 4 February 2005, have received a response. The responses have included replies: providing the information requested in full or in part; indicating that the information is not held by the Department; declining to provide the information requested citing one or more exemptions; seeking to narrow down the request; or seeking more time for consideration of the public interest balance in favour of disclosure. It is not possible to give an average cost of discovery and distribution of each request.

Nepal

Clare Short: To ask the Prime Minister whether he is taking charge of UK policy on Nepal following King Gyanendra's coup; and if he will make a statement. [216444]

The Prime Minister: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer given on 8 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1460W, by my hon. Friend the Minister of State, Foreign Office (Mr. Alexander) to the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mr. Simmonds). The Government have taken a clear position on the actions of King Gyanendra, and all concerned Departments are co-ordinating the Government's response closely.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Leader of the House what discussions have taken place between members of the Government and hon. Members concerning the asking of parliamentary questions on issues concerning their own constituency as a means of obtaining statistics for use during a general election; and if he will make a statement. [216048]

Mr. Hain: The asking and content of parliamentary questions is not a matter for Government.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Aid Agency Accreditation

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what accreditation is required from aid agencies before they are provided with Government funding. [214451]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID engages with a wide range of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) as partner aid agencies. DFID ensures potential partners' fitness to receive funds and this may include checking their 'not for profit' or charitable status. For example, under our Civil Society Challenge Fund and Programme Partnership Agreements, CSOs must provide a copy of their constitution and most recent audited accounts. These documents are used to appraise the viability and validity of their application.

Additionally all our CSO partners must accept DFID accounting arrangements before funds are released to them for the first time and CSOs must report how they have spent each payment we make them.

Aid Conditionality

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress has been made with the review of Government policy on aid conditionality; and if he will make a statement. [215852]

Hilary Benn: At the annual meetings of the IMF and World Bank on 2 October 2004, I launched a consultation process on the draft UK policy paper "Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: changing aid conditionally". Comments were received from around 90 individuals and organisations. I also chaired a consultation meeting with NGO representatives. We are now concluding the consultation process and plan to publish a final version in the near future.

Aid Pledges

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the pledges made by his Department *(a)* in response to international appeals and *(b)* at donor conferences in each of the past three years; and what the outstanding amounts due to be released in respect of each pledge is. [213090]

Hilary Benn: It is not possible to list all pledges made by DFID to international appeals and at donor conferences in each of the last three years without incurring disproportionate cost. The following examples, however, illustrate the UK's very positive record for honouring financial commitments made against specific appeals:

> At the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan in Tokyo in January 2002, DFID pledged £200 million over financial years 2002–03 to 2007–08. DFID is on course to meet and exceed this pledge in the current financial year. At the Berlin Conference on Afghanistan in March 2004, the UK Government increased this pledge to £500 million over the same time period. The latest estimate is that Government Departments have so far disbursed over £303 million of this amount.
>
> After the Bam Earthquake on 26 December 2003, DFID pledged around £2.15 million following appeals of the United Nations and the International Federation of the Red Cross. All of this money was disbursed, except £450,000 we had committed to the International Federation of the Red Cross; their appeal was sufficiently funded by other contributions they received and they advised that the UK contribution would not be required.
>
> At the Madrid Donors' Conference on Iraq in October 2003, the UK committed £544 million towards humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in Iraq. We have, so far, disbursed £367 million of this amount.
>
> The Government have committed £75 million towards the immediate humanitarian response to the tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean, of which £40 million has been pledged to the UN Flash Appeal. As at 7 February 2005, £25.9 million of this commitment has already been allocated to UN agencies. The balance is being programmed in consultation with the United Nations.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211652]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The cost to the Department for International Development (DFID) of early departures is as follows.

	Cost (£)
1997–98	926,268
1998–99	494,903
1999–2000	620,471
2000–01	422,910
2001–02	562,967
2002–03	581,708
2003–04	1,639,414
2004–05[1]	938,770
2005–06[1]	567,927
2006–07[1]	491,699
2007–08[1]	311,071

[1] Estimated expenditure.

The estimated costs for current and future years are based on existing known commitments. They do not include possible costs for any new commitments yet to be entered into.

Debt Relief

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will set out the steps taken by his Department to alleviate the debt of each of the poorest countries in each year since 1997. [214491]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government have been at the forefront of international efforts to deliver debt relief to the world's poorest countries. It provides substantial debt relief through the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative. This initiative, launched with the help of significant UK backing in 1999, is delivering many benefits. To date, over US $70 billion in debt relief has been agreed for 27 countries, reducing their debts by around two-thirds on average, and freeing up resources for spending on poverty reduction.

The UK has committed £2.3 billion of debt relief for eligible countries to cover our obligations under HIPC, including 100 per cent. relief on bilateral UK debts for these countries. It has also pledged an additional $479 million through the multilateral institutions to further support HIPC.

Fifteen countries have reached Completion Point of the HIPC Initiative, and have received irrevocable debt reduction from all creditors and 100 per cent. cancellation from the UK and other G7 creditors. Uganda was the first to reach Completion Point in 2000, followed by Bolivia, Mozambique and Tanzania in 2001, Burkina Faso and Mauritania in 2002, Benin, Mali and Guyana in 2003, and Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Niger and Senegal in 2004.

A further six countries have reached Decision Point of the HIPC Initiative, and no longer make any payments to the UK. Of these, Cameroon, Guinea Republic, and Malawi reached Completion Point in 2000, followed by Sierra Leone in 2002, and Democratic Republic of Congo in 2003. These countries will receive substantial reduction from all creditors and 100 per cent. cancellation of UK debt and other G7 creditors' debt when they reach Completion Point. Other countries that have received debt relief under the HIPC Initiative did not owe any money to the UK.

The UK has and continues to work with many HIPC countries on a partnership basis. Our country programmes have placed a high priority on assisting these countries as they move through the HIPC process.

The UK has already cancelled the aid debts of the poorest countries under its Retrospective Terms Adjustment policy, and in 1997 launched the Commonwealth Debt Initiative to cancel the remaining aid debts of the 'poorer' (lower middle-income) Commonwealth countries committed to poverty reduction. This initiative covers Commonwealth countries with a GNI of less than US $3,115 and small island middle-income Commonwealth countries. Since 1997, 12 Commonwealth countries have benefited from this initiative: Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Mauritius, Solomon Islands, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Tonga, and Turks and Caicos Islands.

In 2004 the UK announced a major new initiative for relief of multilateral debt. From January 2005, the UK will pay its share (10 per cent.) of the debt service owed to the International Development Association (IDA) and African Development Fund on behalf of eligible countries. The initiative already applies to 20 countries (i.e. the 15 post-HIPC countries, as well as Armenia, Mongolia, Nepal, Vietnam, and, in light of the South East Asia Tsunami, Sri Lanka) and more will benefit as they progress through HIPC and strengthen their public expenditure management. The UK is actively working to encourage other countries, in particular our G8 partners, to contribute to the initiative in order to provide full multilateral debt relief.

Departmental Spending

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his latest estimate is of unallocated departmental spending in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07, and *(c)* 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [213261]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the answer provided by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury on Wednesday 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 91OW.

Electronic Barter

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* economic and *(b)* social opportunities afforded to developing countries by electronic barter and bilateral exchange mechanisms; and if he will make a statement. [215404]

Hilary Benn: DFID is aware of the international increase in electronic barter, and electronic trade exchanges. E-barter and e-payments are private sector initiatives, and international and local businesses will pursue economic opportunities in developing countries as they arise. DFID's activities in international trade policy, and capacity building, have not so far focused on electronic barter, or bilateral exchange mechanisms of this nature. DFID's trade strategy is being finalised at present, but there have been no requests from stakeholders in counterpart governments to include e-barter issues.

DFID's concern on electronic exchanges, including the movement of funds, relate to the access of the poor and unbanked to electronic money and payment mechanisms. Access to electronic payment mechanisms is limited to those with access to bank accounts and credit cards in many cases, which currently excludes the majority of the world's poor. DFID's current focus on "banking the unbanked" is consistent with preparing the way for the poor to benefit from electronic payment mechanisms.

Engineers without Borders

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the value to the *(a)* rural and *(b)* environmental work force gained through the participants of the Intermediate Technology Development Group project run by the Engineers Without Borders UK in Sri Lanka; and if he will make a statement. [214752]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID is aware of the good work undertaken by Engineers without Borders UK and their international network of associate organisations. Their placements of engineering students in developing countries and related small scale research projects have had a positive impact on peoples' lives. The universities and companies that support the scheme and students who volunteer are to be congratulated. In Sri Lanka however EWB has not approached DFID for finance for any of their programmes and we have therefore undertaken no assessment of their work there.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) how much *(a)* financial assistance, *(b)* logistical assistance and *(c)* assistance in kind has been provided to Engineers Without Borders UK by his Department for the programme in Bario with the Organisation for Sustainable Engineering in South East Asian Nations since its inception; and if he will make a statement; [214753]

(2) what assessment his Department has undertaken of the *(a)* economic, *(b)* social and *(c)* humanitarian impact of the Organisation for Sustainable Engineering in the South East Asian Nations project undertaken by Engineers Without Borders UK in Bario; and if he will make a statement. [214754]

Hilary Benn: DFID is aware of the good work undertaken by Engineers without Borders UK and their international network of associate organisations. EWB have made a positive impact upon peoples lives through the placement of engineering students in developing countries and by supporting related small-scale research projects. The universities and companies that support the scheme and students who volunteer are to be congratulated. However, Malaysia is a relatively wealthy country and does not receive any support from DFID. We have therefore provided no funding for EWB nor undertaken any assessment of their work in Bario.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215216]

Hilary Benn: It is DFID's policy that, where information released in response to a Freedom of Information (FOI request) is of wider public interest, it will also be published on the departmental website. DFID has no policy of placing copies of FOI disclosures in the Library.

Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Equal Pay

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the gender gap among staff in his Department. [200869]

Hilary Benn: DFID carried out an equal pay audit in 2003 for staff below the Senior Civil Service. No significant gaps were found. A summary of the review will be placed in the Libraries of the House shortly. The document will be entitled "Equal Pay Audit, Department for International Development, April 2003".

Haiti

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding his Department has set aside to contribute to Haiti's local and national elections in October and November; and if he will make a statement. [215190]

Hilary Benn: The UK is supporting the rehabilitation of Haiti through our substantial contributions to the multilateral funds of the United Nations and the World Bank. Specifically we will be contributing to the election process in Haiti through an EU contribution of 12.5 million euros (£8.625 million[1]) earmarked for this purpose. The UK's share of this amount is 12.7 per cent. or approximately £1.1 million.

[1] At exchange rate prevailing on 9 February 2005 of €1: £0.69

Also, through DFID's small grants scheme in Haiti we are supporting a project with £20,000 for election preparation/electoral process awareness in the north west of Haiti. This is being done in cooperation with the UK non-governmental organisation CARE International. This initiative builds on a previous grant of £250,000 from the civil society challenge fund that supported civic education on citizenship and civil society responsibilities.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on the alleviation of HIV/AIDS in each year since 1997. [214492]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: DFID's Bilateral spending on AIDS and sexual reproductive health in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	£ million
1997–98	38
1998–99	45
1999–2000	76
2000–01	191
2001–02	217
2002–03	274
2003–04	297

HIV/AIDS (Children)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what priority his Department is giving to HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries in preparation for the UK presidency of the G8. [214180]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: I refer my hon. Friend to the response given to her on 13 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 622W.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps the Government are taking to ensure that his Department's field offices are able to track the spending of the £150 million allocated to meeting the needs of HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children; [215341]

(2) what indicators will be used to monitor the spending of the £150 million allocated to meeting the needs of HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children; and when such monitoring will take place. [215339]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: From 1 January 2005 DFID has introduced a new input sector code for "Social protection for orphans and vulnerable children" to enable DFID staff to properly track and monitor the £150 million commitment. Activities to be captured under this code include:

> Legislation, institutional building, special programmes for orphans, street children, children vulnerable to HIV and AIDS and other vulnerable children, cash transfers to vulnerable families, exemption from school/health centre fees, food security and livelihoods, combating child labour.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps will be taken by the Government to ensure that his Department's field offices in countries with large numbers of HIV/AIDS orphans and vulnerable children help to increase the capacity of Government services in those countries to provide support and protection for such children. [215342]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: The UK is committed to spending at least £150 million over the next three years on our response to the orphans and vulnerable children crisis. £44 million will go through UNICEF, £85 million through DFID country programmes in Africa, £5 million in Asia and £2 million on scientific research. At least a further £14 million will be programmed as needs emerge.

Through its country programmes, DFID supports many governments to advance their national OVC plans through the health and education sectors, social protection programmes and working with civil society. To date, 15 sub-Saharan African countries have drawn up national OVC action plans.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to ensure that civil society organisations in developing countries are able to access resources for meeting the needs of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS. [215346]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: We are fully committed to supporting the work of civil society organisations in addressing the AIDS pandemic. Indeed, much of the support to be funded by our OVC financing commitment will be implemented in partnership with both local and international CSOs. Our support via UNICEF will also feature CSO partnerships at country level.

A further specific means of ensuring that CSOs are appropriately involved in responding to the needs of children affected by AIDS is through our agreements with key UK organisations such as HelpAge International and Save the Children, which include AIDS work as a key objective. We are increasing our Civil Society Challenge Fund from £10 million to £14 million this year and actively encourage proposals from NGOs wanting to provide support where it is needed.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since 1997. [213631]

Hilary Benn: DFID has an electronic equivalent of an "in-house" magazine though our internal "Intranet" since 2004. This replaced a printed newsletter, which had been defunct since the late 1990s. The costs of the electronic magazine are subsumed within the running costs of the Intranet team and could not be separated out without disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment his Department has made of how many people have returned to live permanently in Fallujah since the recent military action in the city; and if he will make a statement; [213451]

(2) how many people living in Fallujah have access to water and electricity; [213452]

(3) how many hospitals are open and treating patients in Fallujah; and if he will make a statement; [213453]

(4) how many schools in Fallujah are open and are teaching pupils; and if he will make a statement; [213485]

(5) what recent visits have been made by officials from his Department to Fallujah; when each visit took place; what reports have been sent to him following such visits; and if he will make a statement. [213494]

Hilary Benn: The Multi-National Force Iraq estimates that around 30,000 people have now returned to live in Fallujah.

Safe drinking water is available to everyone living and working in Fallujah from standing water tanks which are filled daily. Bottled water is also available for all citizens at humanitarian assistance sites. Piped water supplies are being restored.

Reconstruction of power transmission and distribution is continuing. Mains electricity and street lighting have been reconnected in some areas. However, most residences are not connected. Power is being supplied to hospitals from stand-alone generators.

Fallujah general hospital and the Jordanian hospital on the outskirts of Fallujah are open and treating patients. Three primary care clinics and one mobile clinic are also in operation.

15 schools are open in Fallujah, with around 670 pupils as of 7 February. The Iraqi Ministry of Education is increasing efforts to publicise the opening of schools in order to encourage greater attendance.

DFID staff and consultants based in Baghdad have been visiting Fallujah regularly since military operations concluded, to participate in weekly co-ordination meetings and monitor the situation on the ground. The first meeting in Fallujah attended by DFID took place on 6 December and the most recent on

7 February. DFID humanitarian and conflict advisers have also visited the city. Reporting and analysis based on these visits are provided regularly to London.

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of levels of mental illness in Iraq *(a)* before and *(b)* since March 2003; and what assistance his Department is providing for mental health services in Iraq. [214420]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: In its 'Health in Iraq' report of September 2004, the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MoH) states that accurate data on mental disorders are scarce. However, the MoH notes that clinical impressions suggest a substantial problem, especially in relation to post-traumatic stress. It also notes the lack of mental health services and that new approaches to community mental health are needed. A national workshop, conducted by the MoH in June 2004, discussed priorities for mental health promotion and strengthening of services.

Improving all types of health services in Iraq will take time. However, steady progress is being made. The MoH has produced Planning Guidelines for 2005, with support from donors. The UN and World Bank managed multi-donor trusts funds, to which DFID has contributed £70 million, provide support to the health sector. DFID has also provided technical assistance to the MoH, directly and through the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the numbers of livestock owned by Fallujah residents that were killed in recent military action in Fallujah; and what steps his Department is taking to assist residents of Fallujah who have lost their livelihood as a result of military action. [214510]

Mr. Gareth Thomas: Information about numbers of livestock killed in Fallujah is not available.

Since the end of hostilities in Fallujah, DFID has been providing technical advice to the Iraqi Government's Fallujah Core Coordination Group (CCG) which has led on humanitarian and reconstruction work in Fallujah. The CCG is working closely with military forces and local leaders to ensure that compensation payments are made and essential services restored to enable normal life and economic activity to resume. Financial resources for reconstruction are being made available from the Iraqi budget and United States' sources.

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to his answer of 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 911W, on Iraq, whether his Department has undertaken research to assess whether cash payments to the poor and unemployed rise at a similar level as prices for food, in circumstances where cash payments have replaced food rationing; what assessment he has made of whether this will happen in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [215172]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not undertaken research specifically into the issue referred to in the question. DFID is at present researching best practice towards social welfare protection measures generally in developing countries, and aims to produce a policy paper in October 2005.

In Iraq, DFID is providing technical assistance to help prepare for future decisions by the Iraqi Government on the reform of the public distribution system for food. Our aim is to enable the Iraqi Government to establish a welfare system targeted at the poor and unemployed, which ensures that families in need are properly supported while removing the economic distortions and inefficiency created by the present system. The actual levels of cash welfare payments at any time will be for the Iraqi Government to decide in view of prevailing circumstances.

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total expenditure by his Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211660]

Hilary Benn: Publicity forms part of our effort to raise awareness and understanding of international development issues in the UK. DFID does not hold a separate advertising budget. The majority of advertising relates to recruitment advertising in newspapers and journals.

Expenditure on publicity was as follows:

	£
(i) 1996–97	579,916
(ii) 1997–98	399,755
(iii) 2003–04	708,580

Estimated expenditure on publicity for 2004–05 is £1 million.

In addition, a one-off publication, the 'Rough Guide To A Better World' has been produced in 2004–05. This innovative project aims to raise awareness of international development and the efforts to which everyone can contribute to improve the lives of people in developing countries. The cost of this publication has been shared between the budgets of Publicity and Development Awareness. The total cost of this production is expected to be £900,000 of which Publicity has contributed £500,000.

Due to reorganisation of the Human Resources Division we do not hold figures for recruitment advertising for the period 1996–98. Advertising expenditure for 2003–04 was £339,173. Estimated expenditure for 2004–05 is £600,000 due to a larger number of posts being advertised.

Budget allocation figures for 2005–08 for publicity and advertising are subject to discussion and are therefore not yet available.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Casinos

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* regional chambers and *(b)* county councils will have a role in the allocation of regional casino licences. [213575]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

The process for the allocation of licences for regional casinos was set out in the Government's statement of national policy on casinos, published on 16 December 2004.

For the first stage of this process, the Secretary of State will appoint an advisory panel to advise her on the areas in which the new regional casinos should be located. In taking forward its work, it will invite the regional planning bodies in England, whose function outside London is undertaken by the regional chambers, to identify a list of broad locations for regional casinos emerging from the work on their regional spatial strategies. At least 60 per cent. of the members of the regional planning body must be members of a range of authorities in the region, including county councils. Regional planning bodies are also required to seek the advice of county councils when revising regional spatial strategies.

Under the Gambling Bill, potential casino operators will also be required to obtain a premises licence from their local licensing authority. The Bill provides that in the case of a county in which there are no district councils, the licensing authority is the county council.

Empty Dwellings

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the empty dwelling management orders will come into effect. [215075]

Keith Hill: Subject to consultation on secondary legislation, and the views of Parliament, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to bring the provisions in the Housing Act 2004 on Empty Dwelling Management Orders into force in England in October 2005.

Commencement in Wales is a matter for the National Assembly.

Homelessness (London)

Sir Sydney Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what criteria were used to allocate funding to the London boroughs for initiatives to tackle homelessness in 2005–06. [215495]

Yvette Cooper: The 2005–06 homelessness grant allocations to London boroughs were based on a review of the 2003–04 and 2004–05 grants. The 2004–05 grants were composed of two elements. The first element allocated to all authorities was formula based reflecting historical levels of homelessness. The second element was awarded following a competitive bidding process open to all authorities.

The evaluation criteria to decide the 2005–06 allocations were:

historical levels of homelessness;

how well they performed using homelessness grant in 2003–04 particularly in delivering on the rough sleeping and bed and breakfast targets;

their delivery of the outcomes required as part of the 2004–05 grant through the implementation of their homelessness strategy and the value for money achieved;

and

their ongoing adherence to other conditions of grant set out in the grant determination regarding submission of quarterly performance monitoring reports and PIE returns.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will also be making some capital grant allocations to some London boroughs as part of a hostels capital improvement project. These grants have been targeted on areas that have succeeded in reducing rough sleeping, but still have a high level of single homelessness in hostels that are often no longer fit for purpose.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the licensing system for houses of multiple occupation will come into force. [215076]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects the licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) will come into force in October 2005, subject to passage of the relevant secondary legislation.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on the proposals for implementation of the HMO licensing scheme in the consultation paper "Licensing in the Private Rented Sector—Consultation on the Implementation of HMO Licensing". The closing date for responses was 9 February.

Housing Health and Safety

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will publish the finalised Housing Health and Safety Rating System provided for in the Housing Act 2004. [215400]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister proposes to lay before Parliament in July a complete package of technical and enforcement guidance on the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, in accordance with section 9 of the Housing Act 2004. Draft technical guidance on the system ("Version 2") was published in November 2004, and we do not expect to propose substantive changes to that guidance before implementation of Part 1 of the 2004 Act, which is planned for October 2005.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many employees in England and Wales retired under the 85 year rule of the Local Government Pension Scheme in each year between 1997 and 2003; [214912]

(2) how many employees in England and Wales qualify for pension benefits under the 85 year rule of the Local Government Pension Scheme. [214914]

Phil Hope: The 85 year rule is not a qualifying condition which conveys a right to retire. It only determines whether and to what extent an actuarial reduction to a pension will apply. Consequently data on such decisions is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. Information on individual decisions taken by scheme members and their employers is best sought from the administering authorities responsible for the Local Government Pension Scheme in England and Wales.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will estimate, in respect of the proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme, how many employees in England and Wales would be affected by raising the earliest age when benefits may be paid, other than on grounds of ill health, from age 50 to 55 in each of the years between 1 April 2005 and 1 April 2015. [215538]

Phil Hope: Until such events occur, following an employer's decision in each specific case, it is not possible to provide this information, which, in itself, could be obtained only from the authority concerned.

Mr. Donohoe: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many employees in England and Wales retired before the age of *(a)* 60 and *(b)* 65 years in each year since 1997 under the Local Government Pension Scheme. [215566]

Phil Hope: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The administering authorities responsible for the 89 separate Local Government Pension Scheme funds in England and Wales may hold this information.

Meden Valley Partnership

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what discussions have taken place between the Meden Valley partnership and *(a)* Nottinghamshire Mental Health Trust and *(b)* Mansfield primary care trust about stress-related health problems due to delays in regenerating housing in the Meden Valley. [214487]

(2) what provision English Partnerships and the East Midlands Development Agency are making for residents who refuse to move and who are not offered refurbished accommodation or low-cost home ownership on completion of the Meden Valley partnership project; [214488]

(3) whether he expects the guarantee given by his Department, the East Midlands Development Agency and English Partnerships that residents will be able to remain in the Royal Estate and Warsop Vale under the Meden Valley partnership housing regeneration programme to be maintained. [214540]

Keith Hill: I will write to my hon. Friend.

Tenancy Deposit Scheme

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what date has been set for the introduction of the tenancy deposit scheme. [215077]

Keith Hill: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects tenants' deposits to be protected as from July 2006, subject to passage of the relevant secondary legislation and following a procurement exercise conducted during the second half of this year.

SCOTLAND

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213688]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, no expenditure has been incurred chartering aircraft.

Departmental Catering

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many departmental *(a)* canteens and *(b)* bars there are; and how much has been spent on the (i) running, (ii) staffing and (iii) supply costs of each in each year since 1997. [213626]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. In buildings where the Office is the sole occupier, there are no in-house canteens, bars or catering services. In accommodation shared with the Scottish Executive, catering services are provided by that Department as the major occupier.

Departmental Policies (Edinburgh, North and Leith)

Mr. Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Edinburgh, North and Leith constituency, the effects on Edinburgh, North and Leith of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [211574]

Mrs. McGuire: My hon. Friend will no doubt receive from relevant Ministers comprehensive information about the impact of Government policies for the areas he mentions. The Scotland Office has no direct role in policy delivery apart from my right hon. Friend's responsibility for matters arising from the recent review of parliamentary boundaries and the conduct of elections to the Scottish Parliament. However, he speaks for Scotland in Cabinet and is always active in ensuring that Government policies take due account of Scotland's needs.

Energy Policy

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what representations his Department have made to *(a)* Ofgem, *(b)* the National Grid Company and *(c)* the Department of Trade and Industry regarding the impact on renewable energy producers in the highlands and islands of the third transmission charging proposal produced by the National Grid Company in December 2004; and if he will make a statement. [210653]

Mrs. McGuire: Ministers and officials in the Scotland Office keep in contact with a range of stakeholders on the transmission charges to apply in future.

We recognise the concerns raised about the potential impact of the proposed GB transmission charges on renewable generators in the highlands and islands and careful consideration will be given to whether there is a need to use the powers taken in the Energy Act to address them.

IT Projects

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list his Department's IT projects in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* amount spent, *(b)* purpose, *(c)* cost of over-run and *(d)* time of over-run. [205788]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established in July 1999.

The Department's IT systems and support are provided by the Scottish Executive. There has been no Scotland Office specific projects since July 1999.

Parliamentary Constituencies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) on what date the Government expects the Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order 2005 to secure Privy Council approval; [213571]

(2) if he will publish the report of the Boundary Commission for Scotland on the new parliamentary boundaries for Westminster constituencies. [213580]

Mr. Darling: I presented the fifth periodical report of the Boundary Commission for Scotland (Cm 6427) to Parliament on 14 December 2004, along with a draft of the Parliamentary Constituencies (Scotland) Order 2005. The Order was approved by the Privy Council on 9 February.

Rail Links

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what formal representations he has made to the Department for Transport on rail links between Scotland and mainland Europe. [209627]

Mr. Darling: Good rail links from Scotland for passengers and freight are essential. The scope for future development of rail services and infrastructure is kept under review.

Renewable Energy

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the First Secretary on energy pricing for renewables. [208800]

Mrs. McGuire: Scotland Office Ministers and officials are in touch with the Scottish Executive on a range of energy issues. Promotion of renewables and operation of the renewables obligation in Scotland are matters for the Executive.

Scottish Electors

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will estimate how many electors there are in each of the new parliamentary constituencies in Scotland. [215383]

Mrs. McGuire: The most recent figures on the number of electors in each of the 59 new parliamentary constituencies in Scotland are not held by the Scotland Office, but are held by the relevant local Electoral Registration Officer.

The electorate in each of the constituencies as at June 2001 is set out in the fifth periodical report of the Boundary Commission for Scotland (cm 6427) which my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Scotland, laid before Parliament on 14 December 2004.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) if he will list the attributable interviews that his Department's special advisers gave to *(a)* newspapers, *(b)* journals, *(c)* books and *(d)* other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004; [201420]

(2) if he will list the attributable *(a)* articles and *(b)* contributions that his Department's special advisers made to (i) newspapers, (ii) journals, (iii) books and (iv) other media in their official capacity between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [201445]

Mrs. McGuire: All special advisers' contacts with the media are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

None of the special advisers who were in post during this period gave or made any attributable interviews or articles in their official capacity between the dates mentioned.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether departmental special advisers have attended meetings with external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals, in their official capacity and without Ministers, since May 1997. [203460]

Mrs. McGuire: Special advisers hold meetings with a wide range of external representatives in their official capacity. All such meetings are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many complaints were made by departmental civil servants regarding the conduct of special advisers between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004. [203478]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the former Minister for the Cabinet Office on 8 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 578W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether departmental special advisers have made speeches in their official capacity since May 1997. [203493]

Mrs. McGuire: Any speeches made by special advisers in an official capacity are conducted in accordance with the "Code of Conduct for Special Advisers".

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) whether departmental special advisers have been responsible for authorising instances of departmental spending since May 1997; [203920]

(2) whether departmental special advisers have given instructions to permanent civil servants without the explicit authorisation of Ministers since May 1997. [203960]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my hon. Friend, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, on 16 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1258W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether departmental special advisers have written to external *(a)* bodies and *(b)* individuals in their official capacity since May 1997. [204298]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the former Minister for the Cabinet Office on 14 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 1004W.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether departmental special advisers have made appearances before parliamentary select committees in their official capacity since May 1997. [204318]

Mrs. McGuire: No.

Staff Surveys

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department in each year since it was established; [213643]

(2) how much was paid to consultants carrying out staff surveys in the Department in each year since it was established; [213660]

(3) what the cost of staff surveys in the Department was in each year since it was established. [213681]

Mrs. McGuire: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. Since that date, no expenditure has been incurred on in-house magazines, staff surveys or employing consultants to undertake staff surveys.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Commercial Waste Recycling

12. **Mr. Dismore:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set targets for the recycling of commercial waste. [215600]

Mr. Morley: There are existing targets for recycling commercial waste under the Packaging Directive. The implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive will set additional targets.

The Government's waste strategy aims to divert commercial waste from landfill and to increase its recycling.

Sugar Regime

13. **Mr. Moss:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on reform of the sugar regime. [215601]

Margaret Beckett: As I have already reported to the House, the November 2004 Agricultural Council broadly accepted that the existing EU sugar regime is unsustainable. We now await detailed legislative proposals from the European Commission to take forward the approach set out in its July 2004 Communication.

21. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she next expects to meet sugar-beet growers from East Anglia to discuss changes to the EU sugar regime. [215610]

Alun Michael: Sugar beet growers from East Anglia will be well represented at the National Farmers Union Annual General Meeting, which my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State will address on 21 February.

Coral Reefs

14. **Mr. Dalyell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 209W, on coral reefs, if she will make a statement on the implementation of the emergency European Commission measures to restrict bottom trawling for the protection of reefs. [215602]

Mr. Bradshaw: The UK asked the Commission to use the emergency powers available under the Common Fisheries Policy framework regulation (Article 7 of Council Regulation 2371/2002) to prohibit the use of types of fishing gear which are known to damage the Darwin Mounds deep water coral reefs. These measures came into place in 2003 and were made permanent in 2004.

The European Commission has used other legal instruments to protect coral reefs in the Azores, Madeira and Canary Islands.

Energy Efficiency

15. **Mr. Jim Cunningham:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to extend the Energy Efficiency Commitment to the commercial sector. [215603]

Mr. Morley: There are no plans at present to extend the Energy Efficiency Commitment to the commercial sector. The ongoing review of the Climate Change Programme will examine the scope for ways to realise further energy efficiency improvements in the commercial sector.

Supply Chain

16. **Mr. Simmonds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the supply chain between growers and retailers. [215605]

Alun Michael: The Government are keen to ensure that supply chains between producers and retailers operate efficiently to the benefit of all parties and have been supporting various initiatives in support of this aim.

Illegal Meat Imports

17. **Sir Michael Spicer:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's policy on illegal meat imports. [215606]

Mr. Bradshaw: DEFRA is fully committed to tackling illegal imports. We are spending £25 million over three years to address this problem. However, the risk of importing disease can never be reduced to zero. There is also a requirement for high standards of biosecurity inland.

The Department co-ordinates the activity of the border enforcement agencies; provides information to assist in deploying their resources according to risk; and undertakes joint publicity campaigns to raise public awareness.

Bovine TB

18. **Mr. Luff:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her most recent estimate is of the incidence of bovine tuberculosis in the west midlands. [215607]

Mr. Bradshaw: Latest provisional TB statistics indicate that there are 175 cattle herds in the West Midlands, predominantly a metropolitan area. In 2004, none of these herds suffered a bovine tuberculosis incident.

20. **Mr. Prisk:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle were slaughtered in the last recorded month as a result of bovine tuberculosis. [215609]

Mr. Bradshaw: Latest provisional TB statistics indicate that 1,792 cattle were slaughtered as bovine tuberculosis reactors or direct contacts in December 2004.

Marine Conservation

19. **Mr. Stunell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to introduce marine conservation legislation. [215608]

Mr. Morley: We have announced in the DEFRA Five Year Strategy that we will bring forward a Marine Bill some time in the next Parliament to deliver our vision of clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. We are also introducing regulations later this year to extend the conservation requirements of the EU Habitats Directive beyond Territorial Waters.

Animal Welfare Bill

23. **Mr. Swayne:** To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to publish the Animal Welfare Bill. [215612]

Mr. Bradshaw: The intention to include an Animal Welfare Bill in the Government's legislative programme was announced in the Queen's Speech.

Farm Animals (Compensation)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what changes she plans to introduce to compensation arrangements for farm animals destroyed in epidemics. [215611]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the long term it is our aim to rationalise compensation arrangements for all notifiable animal diseases. As a first stage, we hope to rationalise the compensation arrangements for four cattle diseases, namely bovine TB, brucellosis, enzootic bovine leucosis and BSE, later this year.

Agricultural Prices

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the National Farmers Union on setting minimum prices for sourcing of agricultural produce in the UK. [211867]

Alun Michael: No discussions have taken place between the National Farmers Union and the Secretary of State, or other Defra ministers, on setting minimum prices for UK sourced agricultural produce. There has been some correspondence between the National Beef Association and Ministers on beef prices.

The Government take the view that the prices negotiated between farmers and purchasers are largely a private, commercial matter between the parties concerned. In 1999–2000, the Competition Commission carried out an extensive investigation into supermarkets which concluded that, taking all matters into consideration, the industry was broadly competitive and that, overall, excessive prices were not being charged nor excessive profits earned.

However, it identified a number of practices engaged in by the larger supermarkets which, because of their buyer power, adversely affected the competitiveness of some of their suppliers. The recommendation of a Code of Practice was accepted and came into force in March 2002. The Office of Fair Trading have reviewed the effectiveness of the code and are currently carrying out an audit of supermarket practice. They hope to complete this shortly.

Animal Protection (European Legislation)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on planned legislation at European Communities level on animal protection; what target groups will be approached by Eurobarometer surveys established in preparation of such legislation under Commission decision 2004/920/EC of 27 December 2004; what the total cost of pre-legislation surveys in this competence will be; and what the role is of Eurobarometer surveys in the legislative process. [215240]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Commission is expected shortly to publish proposals for a directive on the welfare of meat chickens. Detailed negotiations on the directive are likely to take place in the second half of this year, in the UK's presidency.

Commission Decision 2004/921/EC allocates a maximum of €200,000 for a Eurobarometer survey on consumer attitudes towards the welfare of farmed animals. The study will not be targeted at specific groups but will focus on attitudes of the general public across the EU to farm animal welfare issues. The Commission has not published proposals for further surveys at this time.

When preparing proposals for future legislation, the Commission will take into account scientific, veterinary and socio-economic evidence.

Avian Biodiversity

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent reports she has assessed on reductions in avian biodiversity. [214421]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra uses a variety of sources, including the latest monitoring data and research reports to assess avian biodiversity. A long-standing partnership between the statutory conservation agencies, and data providers such as the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, supports many of the bird monitoring and surveillance schemes currently organised in Britain and Northern Ireland.

The results from different schemes are regularly assessed to provide insight into how bird populations are changing and, where possible, whether recruitment, survival or movement are responsible for the patterns observed. Sources such as the web pages for each species under the heading of Breeding Birds of the Wider Countryside Report (www.bto.org/birdtrends/index.htm) give summaries of their trends and some interpretations of the probable causes.

Other key sources that Defra uses in monitoring avian biodiversity include the following:

WeBS Alerts System (http://www.bto.org/survey/webs/webs-alerts-index.htm)—providing national and site-level trend information for wintering waterbirds numbers (WeBS is a partnership between BTO, WWT, RSPB and JNCC).

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) (http://www.bto.org/bbs/index.htm)—providing breeding bird results and online data submission facility (BBS is a partnership between the BTO, JNCC and RSPB).

Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside (http://www.bto.org/birdtrends/)—the 'one-stop-shop' for information about the population status of our common terrestrial birds—updated annually.

Results from the seabird monitoring programme compiled by the JNCC (http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-1550), which in 2004 raised concerns about the populations of some of the UK's internationally important seabirds.

In addition, Defra utilises a wealth of research material on birds, such as the recent review of the effects of climate change on birds (http://www.bto.org/research/advice/ecc/index.htm).

Bovine Passports

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many bovines there are in the UK without valid passports because of late applications; and if she will make a statement. [215604]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are 32,340 animals in the UK without valid passports because of late applications. All have been registered on the Cattle Tracing System and issued with a Notice of Registration. 8,196 animals have since been granted passports following a successful appeal.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what scientific evidence the target of a 60 per cent. reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 2050 is based. [211757]

Mr. Morley: The European Environment Council stated in 1996 the target of limiting global temperature rise to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, requiring stabilisation of carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere at levels below 550ppm. The Environment Council based the target on scientific evidence suggesting that the impacts arising from temperature change greater than 2°C are likely to be severe enough to be classified as dangerous, and therefore to be avoided under the terms of Article 2 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The target has subsequently been reaffirmed, although the science is continually under review to assess the relevance of the target.

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution supported this level of stabilisation in its report Energy—the Changing Climate, published in June 2000, taking account of the scientific assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Government's Energy White Paper, published in 2003, accepted the findings of the Royal Commission. The 60 per cent. target is consistent with the emissions reductions needed by 2050 from developed countries if carbon dioxide is to be stabilised at levels below 550ppm, taking emissions from developing countries into account. Greater reductions will be needed beyond 2050. The scientific analysis is discussed in the paper The scientific case for setting a long term emissions reduction target published by Defra in 2003 and available on the Department's website.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress the UK has made in meeting the Government's carbon emissions reduction targets for 2010. [215589]

Margaret Beckett: The UK remains on course to comfortably achieve its target under the Kyoto Protocol, with greenhouse gas emissions about 21 per cent. below base year levels in 2010. The current review of the Climate Change Programme will consider what additional measures are needed to reach our national goal of a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide by 2010.

Climate Change

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the work her Department is undertaking in respect of adaption policies as a result of climate change. [214220]

Mr. Morley: I assume the hon. Member means to refer to adaptation policies.

The Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change conference convened by the Department from 1–3 February this year built on the Third Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and concluded that there was greater clarity and reduced uncertainty about the impacts of climate change across a wide range of systems, sectors and societies. In many cases the risks identified were more serious than previously thought. This conference underlined the need for urgent work on climate change adaptation as well as mitigation.

At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 10th Conference of the Parties in December 2004, the Department supported negotiations that established the five year Buenos Aires programme of work on adaptation and response measures. This includes work on the scientific, technical and socio-economic aspects of impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change as well as provisions for financial support for adaptation in developing countries through UNFCCC funds to which the UK Government contributes. The Department also supports projects in India, China and Africa to provide underlying climate science and impacts assessments to underpin the development of adaptation strategies.

Domestically, a climate change perspective is already incorporated into a number of policy areas, including planning guidance, water resource management plans and health advice. The Department is working with other Government Departments, local authorities and investors to improve awareness and understanding of the implications of climate change and to encourage the development of adaptation strategies. In this context, the Department funds the UK Climate Impacts Programme, which helps organisations to assess their vulnerability to climate change so that they can prepare their own adaptation strategies.

The Department will develop an Adaptation Policy Framework during this year to coordinate efforts on adaptation across Government. Public and private sector organisations at local, regional and national levels will be crucial to the implementation of real adaptation action identified under this framework.

Clinical Waste

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what studies her Department has carried out into the consequences of incorporating clinical waste into the normal household collection system; and if she will make a statement; [213987]

(2) whether it is her Department's policy to support the scrapping of separate collections by local councils for clinical waste; [213988]

(3) whether her Department has consulted with the Environment Agency on the scrapping of separate collections by local councils for clinical waste. [213989]

Mr. Morley: The Department has not carried out any studies into the consequences of incorporating clinical waste into the household waste collection system and has no plans to do so. Similarly, it has not consulted the Environment Agency about the ending of separate collections by local authorities for clinical waste.

Clinical waste should be collected separately from household waste because of the potential risks to public safety and the environment.

Cockling (Morecambe Bay)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Minister for Nature Conservation and Fisheries will make an official visit to the Morecambe Bay Lifeboat to discuss cockling in Morecambe Bay. [215857]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have agreed to meet my hon. Friend, with the hon. Member for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Collins), to discuss Morecambe Bay issues.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Minister for Nature Conservation and Fisheries will meet the hon. Members for Morecambe and Lunesdale and for Westmorland and Lonsdale (Mr. Collins) to discuss a fisheries licensing scheme for cockle-pickers in Morecambe Bay. [215859]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have agreed to meet the hon. Members. In the meantime I have written to the hon. Member for Morecambe and Lunesdale about the licensing issue and invited her to make any further suggestions she has regarding Morecambe Bay.

Combined Heat and Power

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time members of staff in her Department, excluding agencies and secondees, are working on issues relating to combined heat and power; and if she will estimate the average proportion of their time spent on these issues. [211752]

Mr. Morley: Two members of staff work full-time on CHP; another two spend at least 50 per cent. of their time on CHP; and a further two spend between 10–25 per cent. on CHP. Up to a dozen additional staff work on CHP from time to time. These figures exclude consultants with the necessary technical expertise who support Defra's CHP team by, among other activities, administering the CHPQA programme which provides the yardstick for measuring good quality CHP.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the benefits to English farmers of the reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy made in 2003. [213129]

Alun Michael: We expect the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy to deliver a number of benefits to English farmers. In particular, the decoupling of subsidy from production means that farmers will be free to farm for what the market wants, rather than what the subsidy regime dictates, helping them to become more market oriented and competitive. Initially, farm incomes in England are expected to increase very slightly, with restructuring of businesses and greater efficiency encouraged by decoupling likely to give rise to further improvements in the longer term, relative to what would have happened in the absence of reform.

In addition, the single payment scheme replaces a number of sectoral schemes so should reduce paperwork and bureaucracy. Initial studies indicate that time spent by farms on relevant form filling will be reduced by 60 per cent. by 2007, when considering the SPS and any additional forms related to entry level stewardship.

Community Plant Variety Office

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the activity of the Community Plant Variety Office in the UK in the last 12 months; and if she will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215232]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2004 the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO) funded the conduct of technical tests in the UK on a range of plant species for which applications had been made to the CPVO for grants of Community Plant Breeders' Rights.

During this period the CPVO also granted financial support towards the maintenance of reference collections of ornamental plant species in the UK and commissioned activity on research projects for improving reference collections.

Publications from the Community Plant Variety Office, including its Official Gazette and Annual Reports, can be accessed on the CPVO website at www.cpvo.eu.int.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) when she will reply to the letter dated 24 November 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. G. Bibby; [215123]

(2) when she will reply to the letter dated 29 November from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Mr. G. Bibby. [212288]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State responded on 7 February.

Egg Industry

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure the retention of a competitive UK egg industry after the next World Trade Organisation round. [213374]

Alun Michael: The Government believe that a strongly liberalising outcome to the current round of World Trade Organisation negotiations, the Doha Development Agenda, will benefit UK consumers and producers alike. In pursuing this objective it is mindful of the difficulties some sectors may face and is anxious to ensure that no sector is unfairly put at a competitive disadvantage. We believe there is clear consumer demand in the UK for products meeting high levels of quality, safety and animal welfare. Our Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food is designed to help UK producers to meet this demand. In a WTO context, we continue to press for the introduction of animal welfare provisions which will recognise the additional costs faced by those such as the UK egg industry in complying with high EU animal welfare standards.

Environmental Treaties

Mr. Gummer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the US Administration about its policy on countries entering into international environmental agreements as a condition of bilateral trade agreements. [213227]

Mr. Morley: We are not aware of any such policy on the part of the US government and Defra Ministers have therefore not discussed the issue with the US authorities.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee on waste management met; when and where these meetings took place; which UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement; [214794]

(2) how many times during the *(a)* Italian *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU, the Advisory Committee on waste management met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215407]

Mr. Morley: During the Italian Presidency, which took place between July to December 2003, the Waste Management Committee met in Brussels on the 4 November.

During the Italian Presidency, which took place between January to June 2004, there was a joint meeting of the Waste Management Committee and IPPC Experts on the 12 May which was held in Brussels.

During the Netherlands Presidency, which took place during the last six months of 2004, the Waste Management Committee met on the 1 September in Brussels. The UK is normally represented at these meetings by at least one Defra official.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Committee for the adaptation to technical and scientific progress of the Directive on methods of measurement and frequencies of sampling and analysis of surface water intended for the abstraction of drinking water in the member states met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [216259]

Mr. Morley: The Committee did not meet during these presidencies.

European Environment Agency

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the activity of the European Environment Agency in the UK in the last 12 months; and if she will list the publications and newsletters published by the Agency over that period. [215273]

Mr. Morley: The European Environment Agency (EEA) does not operate directly within its member countries. Most of its work is carried out through contractual arrangements with national organisations. The EEA coordinates this activity within the UK and elsewhere mainly through the European environment information and observation network (Eionet), which is a partnership network of over 900 experts and over 300 organisations in 37 countries. Additionally, the EEA has established five European topic centres to support data collection, management and analysis. One of these (for water) is a consortium of institutions headed by WRc PLC, based in the UK. The EEA is responsible for developing the network and coordinating its activities. The UK network within Eionet consists of nine main institutions either contracted to carry out work for the EEA or supplying expertise and data to fulfil national reporting obligations. Coordination of the national network within the UK and liaison with the EEA is done by the National Focal Point (NFP) based in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, who also supply the UK representative on the EEA Management Board. The UK NFP also produces a twice yearly newsletter to keep contacts and other interested stakeholders up to date on EEA activities.

In 2004 the EEA published 23 reports, technical reports and briefings on environmental topics in paper form, listed in Table 1. In addition the Agency published a brochure 'Eionet connects', detailing the workings of the network. The EEA makes these reports and many other documents available on its website, including its Annual Reports and Annual Management Plans.

Table 1: EEA Publications January 2004 to January 2005 inclusive

Report	*Publication Date*	*Type*
Annual European Community CLRTAP emission inventory 1990–2002	05 January 2005	Technical report No. 6/2004
Analysis of Greenhouse gas emission trends and projections in Europe 2004—Draft	21 December 2004	Technical report No. 7/2004
Greenhouse gas emission trends and projections in Europe 2004	21 December 2004	EEA Report No. 5/2004
Air pollution and climate change policies in Europe: exploring linkages and the added value of an integrated approach	16 November 2004	Technical report No. 5/2004
EEA Briefing 4 -2004—Transport biofuels: exploring links with the energy and agriculture sectors	10 November 2004	Briefing No. 4/2004
Analysis of greenhouse gas emission trends and projections in Europe 2003	26 October 2004	Technical report No. 4/2004
EEA Briefing 3 -2004—Transport and environment in Europe	19 October 2004	Briefing No. 3/2004
10 key transport and environment issues for policy-makers	19 October 2004	EEA Report No. 3/2004
Transport price signals	20 September 2004	Technical report No. 3/2004
Impacts of Europe's changing climate	18 August 2004	EEA Report No. 2/2004
Annual European Community greenhouse gas inventory 1990–2002 and inventory report 2004	14 July 2004	Technical report No. 2/2004
EEA Briefing 2 -2004—Energy subsidies and renewables	04 July 2004	Briefing No. 2/2004
Energy subsidies in the European Union: A brief overview	03 June 2004	Technical report No.1/2004
EEA Signals 2004	01 June 2004	
An inventory of biodiversity indicators in Europe, 2002	12 May 2004	Technical report No 92
High nature value farmland—Characteristics, trends and policy challenges	29 April 2004	EEA report No. 1/2004
Agriculture and the environment in the EU accession countries—Implications of applying the EU common agricultural policy	28 April 2004	Environmental issue report No. 37
Exploring the ancillary benefits of the Kyoto Protocol for air pollution in Europe	13 April 2004	Technical report No. 93
Air pollution in Europe 1990–2000	31 March 2004	Topic report No. 4/2003
Mapping the impacts of recent natural disasters and technological accidents in Europe	23 March 2004	Environmental issue report No. 35
Arctic environment: European perspectives	15 March 2004	Environmental issue report No. 38/2003
EEA Briefing 1/2004—Halting the loss of biodiversity in Europe	09 February 2004	Briefing No. 1/2004
EMEP/CORINAIR Emission Inventory Guidebook—Third edition, October 2003 update	19 January 2004	Technical report No. 30

Note:

Reports are available from the EEA Website: http://reports.eea.eu.int/index_table?sort = Published

Farming Subsidies

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total amount of subsidy received by the British farming industry was in each of the last three years; how much will be paid in the next three years; from which funding sources this money originates; how much was received from *(a)* market regimes and *(b)* import tariffs; and if she will make a statement. [200297]

Alun Michael: Figures for subsidy received by the British farming industry in each of the last three years and forecasts of amounts to be paid in the next three years are set out in the table.

These forecasts are based on the position as at 30 November 2004 and do not take into account the Ministerial Statement of 1 December 2004 concerning the future of the Over Thirty Month Scheme.

The figures for import tariffs have been provided by HM Customs and Excise. Customs and agricultural duties within the common Customs Tariff constitute own resources of the European Union.

Net receipts of agricultural duties for the past three years are as follows:

£ million

	Amount
2001–02	305
2002–03	305
2003–04	341

Source:

HM Customs and Excise Trust Statement

Since 1 January 2001, member states may retain 25 per cent. of these duties by way of collection costs.

However, agricultural levies are not forecast separately into the future. It is combined with Customs duties under the heading "customs duties and levies". The figure for Customs duties and levies for 2004–05 is £2.1 billion and the forecast for 2005–06 is £2.1 billion (announced at the pre-Budget in December 2004).

Farming subsidies PQ—British farming industry subsidy expenditure on farm-based schemes

£000

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
England—CAP Pillar 1 farm-based schemes	1,331,478	1,351,929	1,578,672	1,830,035	1,698,819	1,672,124
England Rural Development	148,871	198,345	220,357	251,000	284,403	285,553
Scotland	329,600	380,273	409,275	395,694	430,000	448,216
Wales	156,348	139,196	220,919	203,195	222,340	221,860
Northern Ireland	159,467	183,565	197,077	209,090	233,044	247,795
Forestry Commission	9,554	14,175	10,325	12,560	13,220	13,220
Over Thirty Months Scheme payments to farmers	191,690	245,178	196,466	178,691	181,268	174,740
Total	2,327,008	2,512,661	2,833,091	3,080,265	3,063,094	3,063,508

Notes:

1. CAP Pillar 1 farm-based schemes in the UK are 100 per cent. funded by the EC.
2. Rural development in England and OTMS is co-funded by the EC and UK Exchequer.
3. Payments made by Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Forestry Commission cover expenditure incurred on both CAP Pillar 1 farm-based schemes (100 per cent. EC funded) and rural development schemes (co-funded by the EC and the UK Exchequer).

Farming subsidies PQ—British farming industry subsidy expenditure on principal farm-based non-BSE schemes

£000

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
England—Pillar 1 Farm based[1]	1,331,478	1,351,929	1,578,672	1,830,035	1,698,819	1,672,124
England Rural Development—EC funded	59,029	73,388	83,717	100,000	118,400	185,100
England Rural Development—UK funded	89,842	124,957	136,640	151,000	166,003	100,453
Scotland[2]	329,600	380,273	409,275	395,694	430,000	448,216
Wales[2]	156,348	139,196	220,919	203,195	222,340	221,860
Northern Ireland[2]	159,467	183,565	197,077	209,090	233,044	247,795
Total	2,125,764	2,253,308	2,626,300	2,889,014	2,868,606	2,875,548

[1] CAP Pillar 1 farm-based schemes in the UK are 100 per cent. funded by the EC.

[2] Payments made by Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland cover expenditure incurred on both CAP Pillar 1 farm-based schemes and rural development schemes.

Note:

This table excludes all disease control and public health measures.

Fish Quotas

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the proportion of the 10 most landed fish species under North Sea Total Allowable Catches fished within the UK 200 mile median limit. [215199]

Mr. Bradshaw: None of the fish stocks that involve the North Sea are exclusively within the United Kingdom's fisheries limits as they also include parts of other sea areas as well. For these stocks, no separate part of the Total Allowable Catch is related exclusively to the UK waters involved, and as such the question as asked cannot be answered.

To calculate an estimate as requested would require information on the catches by vessels of other member states. Such information is only available in terms of totals for the sea areas involved, and this does not include any breakdown of catches in terms of those caught within the UK 200 mile or median line limit. Such estimates could thus only be made available through requesting such information from the individual member states concerned.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures relating to *(a)* UK vessels and *(b)* accession state vessels European Union institutions are bringing forward to address increases in fishing capacity in EU waters since 1 May 2004. [215330]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since the end of the fourth and final stage of the Multi-annual Guidance Programme (MAGP) in 2002, the existing member states' fleets, including that of the UK, have been subject to overall limits on tonnage (GT) and power (kW), known as reference levels. The 10 new member states were not part of the MAGP mechanism, however the Commission is working with them to urgently establish suitable reference levels which will apply retrospectively (from the date of accession). In addition, all potential new entries to the fleet in any member state (including those of the 10) must be offset (in tonnage and power terms) by equivalent withdrawals.

Flooding

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list communities recorded by the Environment Agency as being subject to flooding in 2000, giving in each case the number of *(a)* commercial and *(b)* residential properties flooded; and for how many and what percentage of properties in each community (i) flood defences have been improved, (ii) flood defence improvements have been approved but not yet implemented and (iii) flood defences improvements have been approved. [208722]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: The Environment Agency is the principal authority responsible for managing flood risk in England. The Agency has provided as much information as possible, subject to disproportionate cost limitations, and a copy will be made available in the Library of the House.

I regret it has not been possible, without incurring disproportionate cost, to categorise the properties flooded in 2000 by commercial and residential use, or the other exact details of the other questions. The information placed in the Library will however indicate the considerable progress and investment made in reducing flood risk.

Foot and Mouth

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in how many settled claims for compensation for animals destroyed in the foot and mouth epidemic payments were *(a)* below £100,000, *(b)* exactly £100,000 and *(c)* over £100,000. [216188]

Mr. Bradshaw: There were 10,383 claims below £100,000, no claims for exactly £100,000, and 3,110 claims over £100,000.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent on tackling fuel poverty in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England and *(b)* Stoke-on-Trent. [211707]

Mr. Morley: The Warm Front Scheme the major programme to tackle fuel poverty in the private sector in England, was launched in June 2000. From that time until the end of January 2005 the annual expenditure on Warm Front in England was:

£ million

	Approximate total spend
2000–01	72
2001–02	197
2002–03	163
2003–04	164

The budget available for 2004–05 is £169 million.

The total approximate expenditure on Warm Front in Stoke-on-Trent Central during that period was:

	£
2000–01	65,700
2001–02	1,120,000
2002–03	626,000
2003–04	615,000
2004–05[1]	388,000

[1] Up to end of January 2005.

Annual Expenditure under the previous Home Energy Efficiency Scheme from June 1997 and May 2000 was approximately £60 million.

The annual estimated expenditure in Stoke-on-Trent Central during that period was:

£

	Estimated expenditure
1997–98	70,400
1998–99	102,500
1999–2000	133,700

Intervention Prices

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average intervention price for *(a)* skimmed milk powder, *(b)* butterfat powder, *(c)* wheat and *(d)* beef was in pounds sterling for each year since 1992; and what the proposed price levels are for (i) 2005, (ii) 2006, (iii) 2007 and (iv) 2008. [214580]

Alun Michael: The actual intervention prices for skimmed milk powder, wheat and beef since 1992 are shown as follows. The rates in pound sterling are dependent on the exchange rate in force on the date of the operative event pertaining to individual purchases.

Skimmed Milk Powder

From	*(ECU/EURO per 100 kg)*
14 May 1990	172.43
1 July 1993	170.20
1 February 1995	205.52
1 July 2004	195.24
1 July 2005	184.97
1 July 2006	174.69

Wheat

From	*(ECU/EURO per tonne)*
1993–94	117.00
1994–95	108.00
1995–96	100.00
2000–01	110.25

Beef

Prior to:	*(EURO per tonne)*
1 January 2000	Information not readily available
From:	
1 January 2000	3,475
1 July 2000	3,242
1 July 2001 to 30 June 2002	3,013

No provision has ever been made to support butterfat powder by intervention.

With the exception of the 2005 and 2006 rate for skimmed milk powder, the RPA does not currently hold any information on the proposed rates for skimmed milk powder, wheat and beef for the 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008 years.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* UK-produced and *(b)* EU-produced (i) skimmed milk powder, (ii) butterfat powder, (iii) wheat and (iv) beef was (A) bought into intervention and (B) sold out of intervention (1) within the EU and (2) outside the EU for each year since 1992. [214581]

Alun Michael: Details of the quantities of products purchased into, and sold out of, intervention in the UK between 1 October 1995 and 30 September 2004 are set out in the following tables.

The Rural Payments Agency does not have sufficient information readily available:

on quantities purchased or sold prior to 1 October 1995;

to distinguish between the quantities of goods produced in the UK and the EU; or

to distinguish between EU and non EU sales.

No provision has ever been made to support butterfat powder under the intervention arrangements.

Intervention purchases and removals skimmed milk powder

Tonnes *Date*	*Purchases*	*Removals*
1 October 1995 to 30 September 1995	28,430.000	680.000
1 October 1996 to 30 September 1997	20,716.000	1,840.000
1 October 1997 to 30 September 1998	33,100.000	2,354.000
1 October 1998 to 30 September 1999	17,256.000	19,011.825
1 October 1999 to 30 September 2000	0.000	75,570.750
1 October 2000 to 30 September 2001	0.000	3,325.000
1 October 2001 to 30 September 2002	25,639.000	1,245.025
1 October 2002 30 September 2003	30,729.000	7,882.425
1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004	1,816.000	8,554.925
Total	157,686.000	120,463.950

Beef

Tonnes *Date*	*Purchases*	*Removals*
1 October 1995 to 30 September 1995	27,631.444	3,557.893
1 October 1996 to 30 September 1997	69,005.861	10,170.119
1 October 1997 to 30 September 1998	11,934.175	11,031.841
1 October 1998 to 30 September 1999	1,266.677	57,779.765
1 October 1999 to 30 September 2000	0.000	36,153.676
1 October 2000 to 30 September 2001	0.000	13.461
1 October 2001 to 30 September 2002	0.000	0.000
1 October 2002 30 September 2003	0.000	0.000
1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004	0.000	0.000
Total	109,838.157	118,706.755

Wheat

Tonnes *Date*	*Purchases*	*Removals*
1 October 1995 to 30 September 1995	0.000	0.000
1 October 1996 to 30 September 1997	0.000	0.000
1 October 1997 to 30 September 1998	2,066.840	0.000
1 October 1998 to 30 September 1999	40,700.920	25,346.080
1 October 1999 to 30 September 2000	0.000	17,119.160
1 October 2000 to 30 September 2001	0.000	0.000
1 October 2001 to 30 September 2002	404.200	0.000
1 October 2002 30 September 2003	994.320	994.320
1 October 2003 to 30 September 2004	0.000	707.340
Total	44,166.280	44,166.900

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent from EU funds in *(a)* intervention purchases and *(b)* export restitution for each agricultural product for each year since 1992. [214582]

Alun Michael: Details of expenditure from EU funds on intervention purchases for each year since 1992 are shown in table I.

The RPA does not hold details of expenditure on export refunds during 1992 following the introduction of a redeveloped computer system in 1993. Details of expenditure on export refunds since 1993, for each agricultural product sector, are shown at table II.

Table I: Intervention purchases—1992–93 to 2003–04

£000

	Beef	*Butter*	*Cereals*	*Milk powder*
1992–93	194,293	3,958	86,585	0
1993–94	10,574	10,482	142,162	8,724
1994–95	0	0	2,398	1,944
1995–96	0	0	128	0
1996–97	158,581	12,727	1,187	50,706
1997–98	114,881	0	44,912	35,189
1998–99	7,470	0	72,969	37,687
1999–2000	0	18,271	9,960	17,940
2000–01	0	2,454	1,429	0
2001–02	0	6,022	68	3,680
2002–03	0	0	7,625	17,809
2003–04	0	0	0	26,869

Table II: Export refund paid from EU funds—calendar years 1993–2005

£000

	Sugar	*Oils*	*Eggs*	*Poultry*	*Pigmeat*	*Beef*
1993	83,238.59	6.02	408.13	2,653.61	1,911.96	64,078.03
1994	68,648.35	37.82	280.97	3,096.58	2,411.80	67,238.02
1995	73,642.11	253.48	279.39	2,379.32	1,916.56	103,562.50
1996	61,765.04	17.49	152.92	823.20	1,781.20	12,158.00
1997	60,804.29	221.21	121.85	435.23	650.92	321.49
1998	96,330.92	1.98	234.41	323.58	1,638.92	66.36
1999	97,653.86	0	308.03	524.04	2,919.97	0
2000	71,863.11	0	235.11	199.71	2,973.00	52.46
2001	70,527.24	0	191.61	51.53	423.82	25.45

Table II: Export refund paid from EU funds—calendar years 1993–2005

£000

	Sugar	*Oils*	*Eggs*	*Poultry*	*Pigmeat*	*Beef*
2002	74,105.46	0	216.02	97.01	268.74	23.82
2003	87,869.39	0	172.57	68.48	326.38	20.79
2004	123,623.66	0	174.68	56.73	557.54	18.01
2005	15,329.92	0	18.27	7.11	41.40	1.11

	Milk and milk products	*Fresh fruit and veg.*	*Processed fruit and veg.*	*Cereals*	*Rice*	*Non annex I*
1993	100,251.72	32.61	1,437.32	197,279.64	27.57	53,635.54
1994	116,244.68	56.72	1,488.88	129,084.78	29.13	57,087.21
1995	100,842.41	41.86	1,287.57	49,184.23	22.62	51,411.23
1996	90,735.61	28.99	1,225.68	20,707.53	30.14	48,511.61
1997	141,062.39	19.53	847.76	40,470.45	21.17	39,819.17
1998	97,627.47	15.53	813.13	25,904.26	6.41	37,885.90
1999	73,431.78	22.03	716.50	55,130.30	1.61	39,420.37
2000	70,824.56	21.51	689.50	39,155.24	7.78	32,738.33
2001	34,986.88	18.43	554.27	3,137.64	12.25	24,155.42
2002	55,298.03	16.16	473.99	161.36	9.79	32,679.64
2003	85,494.36	15.54	662.78	4,949.37	9.07	25,952.53
2004	71,399.08	0	406.60	120.04	2.69	24,792.77
2005	5,115.22	0.83	27.72	44.33	0	1,969.13

Mobile Phones

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many mobile phones have been recycled *(a)* wholly and *(b)* partly in each year since 1997. [213983]

Mr. Morley: No data was readily available on the number of handsets recycled per year since 1997. However, industry estimates that 18 million handsets are replaced every year and that in total over the last two years there have been about five million handsets taken by mobile phone recycling and refurbishment companies in the UK. It is further estimated by industry that about 60 per cent. of the handsets taken for recycling and refurbishment have been refurbished and tested in the UK and then sold for re-use abroad, mostly to Eastern Europe, Asia and Africa. The remaining 40 per cent. have been sent for materials recycling.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to encourage the recycling of mobile phones and their component parts by *(a)* businesses and *(b)* the general public; and if she will make a statement. [213990]

Mr. Morley: Defra has been closely involved in developing implementation proposals for the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, which requires producers of electrical equipment, including mobile phones, to treat and recycle their products to target levels. The Directive sets out requirements for separate collection of WEEE from businesses and private householders. The Directive also requires that private householders are given information on collection facilities available to them in order to minimise the co disposal of WEEE as unsorted municipal waste.

Parliamentary Questions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply fully to question reference 211860 regarding civil contingency planning for major floods. [215940]

Mr. Morley: I refer the hon. Member to my earlier reply of 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1023–24W.

Sewage Discharge

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the Environment Agency collects on discharges of sewage into rivers; which rivers are monitored; and what data are collected in each case. [211765]

Mr. Morley: Defra obtains aggregated information from the Environment Agency on compliance of sewage treatment works in England and Wales with their discharge consents. This information is published in the e-Digest of Environmental Statistics at the following Defra website location:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/inlwater/iwdischcmp.htm

Information on individual river stretches is available in the "What's in your backyard" section at the following Environment Agency website location:

http://216.31.193.171/asp/1_introduction.asp?language=English

The Environment Agency routinely monitors about 40,000 kilometres of running freshwaters representing almost the whole of the river and canal system in England and Wales. Monitoring data include chemical and biological parameters reported annually and included in the Government's headline quality of life indicators, and concentrations of phosphate and nitrate.

The aesthetic quality of the water environment, including sewage derived waste, is monitored at about 450 sites.

The Environment Agency is currently establishing a system requiring sewerage companies to provide information on daily flows of treated effluent discharges from sewage works. This will enable the Agency to compile information on how much treated effluent is discharged on a monthly and yearly basis. This system is expected to be in place by April 2006.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what steps her Department is taking to prevent the network of combined sewage and storm water overflows discharging raw sewage into the River Thames; [211979]

(2) what investment is planned from 2005 *(a)* to improve the quality of effluent discharged through overflows, *(b)* to increase the storage capacity at sewage and wastewater treatment works and *(c)* to ensure that more sustainable drainage systems are used in the future growth of London. [211981]

Mr. Morley: Since 2001 officials from my Department have been involved in a strategic study of the environmental impact of intermittent storm sewage discharges to the Thames Tideway. The Thames Tideway Strategic Study Group includes members from Thames Water, the Environment Agency, the Greater London Authority and the Office of Water Services (Ofwat). The remit of the study is to identify problems caused, and to propose potential solutions, having regard to costs and benefits.

In June 2004 an interim report from the study was submitted to Defra. I carefully considered the findings and proposals and decided that further investigations were needed into the proposed long-term interceptor tunnel solution, and possible smaller-scale measures, which could provide earlier improvements to the overflow discharges.

As a result, the Final Guidance from the my right hon. Friend, Secretary of State, to the Director-General of Ofwat concerning water company price limits from 2005–10, published on 4 October 2004, indicated further work needed to be done. The Final Determination published by Ofwat on 2 December 2004 included provision for funding of further investigations by Thames Water.

I expect the Study Group to report back to Ministers on the outcome of the further investigations as soon as possible. At that point Ministers will consider options for an appropriate course of action. Any investment required can then be considered by Thames Water and Ofwat.

Thames Water's price limits for 2005–10 include provision for significant treatment capacity increases at Mogden, Beckton and Crossness sewage works. The capacity increases are expected to reduce the frequency and impact of storm water discharges from these works, although no increases to the storm sewage storage capacity at these works is planned.

Funding provision has also been made to improve the continuous treated discharge at Riverside sewage works, and to enable Thames Water to continue to deploy two oxygenation vessels to the tidal Thames whenever the Environment Agency considers they are needed to reduce the impact of overflows following rainfall events.

It is one of Defra's aims to promote sustainable infrastructure, such as sustainable drainage systems in future housing projects, such as the Thames Gateway.

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what obligations there are on Thames Water to maintain and update its sewage system; and what action she has undertaken to ensure that its sewage systems remain well maintained and updated. [211980]

Mr. Morley: Sewerage undertakers are under a statutory duty under section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, enforceable by the Secretary of State or the Director General of Water Services, to provide, improve and extend public sewers (whether inside its area or elsewhere) and cleanse and maintain those sewers in order to ensure the effectual drainage of their area.

In the treatment and disposal of sewage, Thames Water must meet obligations set by European and domestic legislation. These obligations are specified in discharge consents issued and enforced by the Environment Agency.

My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, gave guidance to the Director General of Water Services on policies for the Periodic Review of water price limits for 2005–10. The guidance identified proper attention to existing assets, maintenance, leakage and sewer flooding together with building on the already much improved water environment with further evidence based improvement among its priorities.

Following that guidance, Ofwat's final determination for Thames Water includes an assumption of £1,366 million capital investment to maintain and upgrade its sewerage infrastructure in the period 2005–10. This will include capital maintenance to maintain the serviceability of their assets, and to sustain levels of service to their customers; investment to meet the demands of new customers; environmental improvements to deliver Government policy; and investment to remove properties from the risk of flooding from overloaded sewers.

Soil/Ground Water Pollution

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has commissioned on the duration of damage to *(a)* soil and *(b)* ground water on land that was used for (i) munitions production or (ii) fireworks production; and if she will make a statement. [214402]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency has published two documents regarding the potential for contamination of land at former explosives manufacturing sites (including fireworks). Both deal with the characteristics of the potential contaminants at such sites. This includes their solubility and biodegradability which can be used to indicate the likelihood of them persisting at the site and the methods required to investigate and remediate such contamination.

These reports are:

R and D Technical Report P5–042/TR/03

Land Contamination: Technical Guidance on Special Sites: Explosives Manufacturing and Processing Sites.

Project Record P5–036/01

Collation of Toxicological Data and Development of Guideline Values for Explosive Substances. Collation of Physicochemical data.

This second document is the first step in the production of Contaminated Land Exposure Assessment (CLEA) Soil Guideline Values.

The Agency has also produced general guidance on the assessment of natural attenuation (the dispersion or breakdown) of contaminants in groundwater:

R and D Publication 95

Guidance on the Assessment and Monitoring of Natural Attenuation of Contaminants in Groundwater

Defra has two publications in its "Industry Profiles" series on munitions and firework production. This series provides information on the processes, materials and waste associated with individual industries, with respect to land contamination:

Chemical Works: explosives, propellants and pyrotechnics manufacturing works;

Engineering Works: mechanical engineering and ordnance works.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213798]

Alun Michael: Through its Learning and Development Strategy Defra links training opportunities closely to its current and future business needs and provides access to training to develop staff to their full potential.

The costs of centrally provided learning and development opportunities in each year since Defra was created were:

£

	Staff training	*Staff development*	*Total*
2000–01	570,779	70,825	641,604
2001–02	1,012,178	28,792	1,040,970
2002–03	1,400,279	[1]183,784	1,584,063
2003–04	462,749	[1]1,237,291	1,700,040
2004–05	170,899	[1]2,493,914	2,664,813
	3,616,884	4,014,606	7,631,490

[1] Includes Senior Management Leadership Development Programme

Supermarkets

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the supermarkets' code of practice on purchasing from farmers. [211623]

Alun Michael: The supermarkets code of practice seeks to regulate a limited number of practices engaged in by the major supermarkets in their dealings with their direct suppliers, relatively few of whom are farmers.

Responsibility for the code rests with the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). In February 2004 OFT published a report of its review of the operation of the code. This can be found on the OFT website at: www.oft.gov.uk/news/press+releases/2004/28–04.htm.

The review concluded that there was a widespread belief among suppliers that the code was not working properly, but it found no hard evidence for this belief. Given the reluctance of suppliers to provide specific evidence of alleged breaches of the code, the OFT has commissioned a focused audit of the four supermarkets bound by the code. The purpose of the audit is to establish hard facts about compliance with the code as a basis for any further action. The OFT hopes to publish a report of the audit in the next few weeks.

Waste Management

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she has made of the *(a)* costs and *(b)* benefits of introducing a zero waste strategy; [214665]

(2) what discussions she has had with *(a)* municipalities in other countries and *(b)* local authorities in the United Kingdom that have adopted zero waste strategies; [214667]

(3) what assessment she has made of the use of zero waste strategies in *(a)* municipalities in other countries and *(b)* local authorities in the United Kingdom. [214668]

Mr. Morley: No assessment has been made by government of the cost or benefits of introducing a zero waste strategy.

No specific discussions have taken place with *(a)* municipalities in other countries and *(b)* local authorities in the United Kingdom, on zero waste strategies and no assessments have been made of the use of such strategies.

"Waste Strategy 2000" set out the Government's priorities for sustainable waste management. The Government's response to the Strategy Unit Report "Waste Not Want Not" identified further steps to be taken to help deliver our priorities and targets. Although "Waste Strategy 2000" is not a zero waste strategy (either zero waste to landfill, or a totally closed resource cycle), it does demand substantial waste minimisation, and significantly increased levels of re-use and recycling.

Local authorities in England are encouraged to adopt a waste strategy that is in line with the waste hierarchy in "Waste Strategy 2000", which prioritises waste reduction, re-use and recycling.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will consult on the inclusion of redesign in the waste hierarchy; and if she will make a statement. [214666]

Mr. Morley: Waste Strategy 2000, which sets out the Government's priorities for sustainable waste management, included a commitment to carry out a review in 2005. This review will provide an opportunity for consultation on existing waste policies and delivery mechanisms.

Although Waste Strategy 2000 does not include 'redesign' specifically within the waste hierarchy, both redesign and 'ecodesign' are identified as ways to achieve reductions in waste (see paragraph 2.10, WS2000, part 1, page 1 5; also paragraph 4.36, WS2000, part 2, page 45; and paragraph 5.6, WS2000, part 2, page 65).

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has evaluated on the effectiveness of use of the Estech Europe waste disposal method by local authorities; and if she will make a statement. [214913]

Mr. Morley: Information about the effectiveness of the Estech Fibercycle process can be found on the Waste Technology Data Centre web page which is contained within the Environment Agency web site at www.environment- agency.gov.uk.

The Waste Technology Data Centre is part of Defra's Waste Implementation Programme's New Technologies workstream and was set up to provide impartial information to local authorities about technologies in waste processing. It is managed by the Environment Agency on behalf of Defra.

The Waste Implementation Programme was set up as a means of providing assistance to local authorities in establishing their strategies for diverting bio-degradable municipal solid waste from landfill as required by the Landfill Directive.

A direct link to the Estech Fibercycle page can be found at www.environment-agency.gov.uk and then by navigating to wtd, waste technologies, physical, autoclave, estech fibre cycle process.

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is taking to encourage increased clarity in the labelling relating to recycling on plastic packaging and containers; and if she will ensure that local authorities have consistent policies relating to the range of plastic materials that they will collect for recycling. [214915]

Mr. Morley: Commission Decision 97/129/EC provides numbering and abbreviations for the identification of packaging materials, including plastics. While the marking system is voluntary, we encourage manufacturers to use the markings where possible to aid the process of sorting and recycling of the plastic packaging waste.

Government have set each local authority in England statutory performance standards for recycling and composting of household waste for 2003–04 and 2005–06. In addition, the Household Waste Recycling Act 2003 requires waste collection authorities—subject to certain exemptions—to provide a kerbside collection service of at least two recyclable materials by 2010. It is local authorities' responsibility to decide which range of materials they collect for recycling or composting, taking into account local circumstances, to help them meet the standards and the requirements of the Act. The Waste and Resources Action Programme supports and advises local authorities on separate collection of dry recyclables and organic wastes.

Sue Doughty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was spent on waste management in the United Kingdom as a proportion of gross domestic product in each of the last five years; how much was Government expenditure in each year; what the projected expenditure as a proportion of gross domestic product is for each of the next five years; and how much she estimates will be Government expenditure in each year. [215691]

Mr. Morley: Information is not available centrally in the form requested. Figures are available for the total expenditure by local waste disposal and collection authorities in England on the management of municipal waste for each of the years from 1999–2000 to 2002–03. The table provides these figures and what this expenditure represents as a proportion of gross value added for England.

	Gross Value Added for England at Current Basic Price in (£)[1]	*Net current expenditure on waste management expenditure by waste disposal and collection authorities in England in (£)*[2]	*Waste management expenditure by waste collection and waste disposal authorities as a percentage of GVA in England*
2002–03	776,107,000	1,806,684	0.233
2001–02	736,233,000	1,653,856	0.225
2000–01	698,369,000	1,521,338	0.218
1999–2000	668,857,000	1,423,278	0.213

[1] Under European System of Accounts 95 (ESA95), the term GVA is used to denote estimates that were previously known as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at basic prices. Under ESA95 the term GDP denotes GVA plus taxes (less subsidies) on products, i.e. at market prices. Regional accounts are currently only published at basic prices, so the figures are now referred to as GVA rather than GDP as in previous publications. Sourced from national statistics website www.statistics.gov.uk and then navigating through economy, regional gross value added, products results, NUTS1 Regional Gross Value Added (1989–2003) (data tables).

[2] Current Prices from revenue outturn data at ODPM website www.local.odpm.gov.uk and then navigating through statistics, national statistics, revenue statistical releases.

Water Utilities (London)

Mr. Edward Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which water utilities serving Greater London were prosecuted in 2004 for serious environmental offences which resulted in a fine of over £1,000; what the nature was of the offences; and how much they were fined. [211983]

Mr. Morley: In 2004, Thames Water Utilities Ltd. and Anglian Water Services Ltd. were the only water utilities serving Greater London to be prosecuted for serious environmental offences. In all cases the prosecutions were brought under either:

(a) Section 85(1) of the Water Resources Act 1991—permitting any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter or any solid waste matter to enter controlled waters, or

(b) Section 85(3) or 85(3)*(a)* of the Water Resources Act 1991—permitting any trade effluent or sewage effluent to be discharged into any controlled waters, or to be discharged from land in England and Wales, through a pipe into the sea outside the seaward limits of controlled waters.

Details of the offences including dates, location of offence and total fine imposed are set out as follows.

	2004	*Location of offence*	*Offence*	*Fine (£)*	*Total fine (£)*
Anglian Water Services Ltd.					
1	17 June	Wilstead, Bedfordshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (1)	18,000	18,000
2.	7 October	Bedford, Bedfordshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	17,500	32,905
	7 October	Bedford, Bedfordshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	15,405	
Thames Water Utilities Ltd.					
3.	20 February	Watford, Middlesex	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)*(a)*	8,000	8,000
4.	2 July	Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)*(a)*	25,000	50,000
	2 July	Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (1)	25,000	
5.	7 July	Fleet, Hampshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)*(a)*	18,000	18,000
6.	9 August	Burghclere, Berkshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	12,500	12,500
7.	27 August	Otford, Kent	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (1)	10,000	10,000
8.	29 September	Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	12,000	12,000
9.	15 October	Crawley, West Sussex	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	15,000	15,000
10.	6 December	Hendon, London	Water Resources Act 1991, Section 85 (3)	7,000	7,000

World Economic Forum (Davos)

Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her presentation to the World Economic Forum in Davos on 27 January 2005, and the outcome of the meeting. [214329]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State appeared alongside the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, the Leader of the House of Lords, and the Government Chief Scientist Sir David King in three separate workshops on Climate Change at Davos.

Reports on the sessions attended by the Secretary of State can be found at: www.weforum.org/annual meeting/summaries2005.

TREASURY

Bank Accounts (Muslim Organisations)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has discussed with senior representatives of the Royal Bank of Scotland the closure of bank accounts of Muslim organisations by the bank. [215521]

Mr. Timms: Closure of bank accounts is a matter for individual financial institutions.

Child Trust Funds (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children in Coventry south will benefit from the child trust fund. [215073]

Mr. Timms: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Battersea (Martin Linton) on 30 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 87–88W. All children born and living in the UK since 1 September 2002 whose families receive child benefit will be eligible for the Child Trust Fund.

Cold Weather Deaths (Greater London)

Tom Cox: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths were attributed to cold weather and lack of heating in homes in the Greater London area in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [215162]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Len Cook to Mr. Tom Cox, dated 10 February 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths were attributed to cold weather and the lack of heating in homes in the Greater London area in each of the last five years. (215162)

Information is not readily available from death registration and certification to routinely attribute deaths to weather or heating in homes.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Gordon Marsden: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effect of his Department's actions and policies on Blackpool, South constituency since *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2001. [215618]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented the economic performance of the Blackpool, South constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 46 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have fallen by over 80 per cent. Looking more specifically at improvements since the 8 of June 2001, the beginning of our second term in government, claimant unemployment has fallen by a third and long-term unemployment has fallen by 8 per cent.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Folkestone and Hythe constituency, the effects on Folkestone and Hythe of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [215963]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Folkestone and Hythe constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 56 per cent., and both long-term unemployment and long-term youth unemployment have nearly been eliminated, having fallen by 90 and 97 per cent. respectively.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

Mr. Chris Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Woodspring constituency, the effects on Woodspring of his Department's policies and actions since 2nd May 1997. [215970]

Mr. Timms: The Government have put in place a broad programme of both macroeconomic and microeconomic reform since our election in 1997 designed to better the economic performance of all parts of the UK. Since these policies were implemented, the economic performance of the Woodspring constituency has improved considerably. For example, since May 1997, claimant unemployment has fallen by 67 per cent., long-term unemployment has fallen by almost 95 per cent. while long-term youth unemployment has been eliminated.

The Neighbourhood Statistics Service provides a wide range of statistical information at parliamentary constituency level, taken from the 2001 census and other sources. This service is available on the National Statistics website at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk./.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the (i) Customs Co-operation Committee-EEC-San Marino, (ii) EEC-Denmark-Faroe Islands Joint Committee and (iii) European Economic Area Joint Committee met; when and where each meeting took place; what UK Government expert was present at each meeting; and if he will make a statement. [216220]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not readily available, because these committees are the province of the European Commission, and member states' officials do not attend.

European Investment Bank Loans

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list projects during the last five years for which Treasury approval has been granted for European Investment Bank Loans in response to applications from *(a)* the National Assembly for Wales, *(b)* the Scottish Executive, *(c)* the Northern Ireland Executive, *(d)* local authorities in England, *(e)* local authorities in Wales, *(f)* NHS trusts in England and *(g)* NHS trusts in Wales. [215475]

Mr. Boateng: The European Investment Bank's lending decisions are a matter for the Bank and the individual project promoters. The promoters submit potential projects, which are then assessed by the Bank against its lending criteria. Based on this assessment, the Bank's Board of Directors decide whether or not to approve an individual project.

Under its Statute, the European Investment Bank has to ask for an opinion from the Government of the member state in which the project will take place.

European Investment Bank loans do not readily break down into the categories requested. Listed in the following table are loans to UK projects approved in the last five years by the European Investment Bank, broken down by UK region. Details of lending to the UK broken down by sector are available on the EIB website http://www.eib.org.

Region/Project name	*Board decision*	*Currency*	*M Currency*	*M Euro*
Multi-region				
C and W Communications Network Integration	1999	GBP	250	354.38
AAE European Rail Freight Wagons PPP	1999	EUR	165	165
GNER Rolling Stock	2000	GBP	105	166.06
One-2-One Mobile Multimedia	2001	GBP	300	471.18
HEFCE Higher Education Agency Loan	2001	GBP	100	161.42
Telia Pan-European Viking Network	2001	EUR	65	65
P&O North Sea Ferries	2001	GBP	40	63.64
Halifax Plc. Urban Renewal Framework	2001	GBP	150	241.43
National Grid Transmission II	2002	GBP	200	317.71
South Central Trains New Rolling Stock	2002	GBP	200	307.79
Abbey National Urban Renewal FW	2002	GBP	150	245.46
BBC Worldwide	2002	GBP	25	40.91

Region/Project name	*Board decision*	*Currency*	*M Currency*	*M Euro*
Princes Food and Drinks II	2002	GBP	25	40.4
Transco Gas Transmission	2002	GBP	200	326.26
UK-Norway Electricity Interconnector	2003	EUR	20	120
Nationwide Building Society Urban Renewal	2003	GBP	100	146.16
HBODS PPP Agency Framework Loan	2003	GBP	100	143.14
Otto Versand E-Business (121 + Reg. Dev.)	2003	EUR	58	58
Air Products Europe II	2003	USD	100	86.04
NHS Lift UK Primary Healthcare AG Loan	2004	GBP	150	222.65
Flowserve Product Development	2004	EUR	10.5	10.5
BAA Airports Modernisation III-Ten	2004	GBP	150	218.4
RBS Urban Renewal Framework Loan	2004	GBP	100	149.09
DLR Woolwich Arsenal Extension PPP	2004	GBP	75	111.82
Britpipe Gas Importation (Ten)	2004	EUR	500	500
Imperial College Infrastructure	2004	GBP	50	71.88
M1 Westlink and M2 PPP	2004	GBP	65	93.31
AAE Freight Rolling Stock (EU)	2004	EUR	55	55
Total multi-region			28	4,953
Eastern				
North East London Hospitals PPP	2002	GBP	100	163.13
Total Eastern			1	163.13
East Midlands				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	32	49.42
Severn Trent Water VIII	1999	GBP	50	77.22
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	2.5	3.75
National Power Generation	1999	GBP	219	346.35
Severn Trent Water X	2000	GBP	150	215.33
Total East Midlands			5	692
London				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	32	49.42
A13 DBFO Road	1999	GBP	90	137.13
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	32.5	48.78
Thames Water IV	1999	GBP	100	154.44
Edmonton Waste to Energy	1999	GBP	20	30.89
London Underground PPP	2000	GBP	900	1,508.30
THFC Urban Renewal III	2000	GBP	21.07	33.32
Thames Water V	2000	GBP	100	163.19
BAA UK Airports Modernisation II	2001	GBP	70	122.16
BAA Heathrow Terminal 5	2002	GBP	250	390.32
BBC Broadcast	2002	GBP	66	103.21
Seeboard Powerlink PPP	2002	GBP	45	71.49
Royal London and Barts Hospitals PPP	2003	GBP	250	362.53
Channel Tunnel Rail Link S2-Ten	2003	GBP	400	580.05
Ford Engines RDI	2004	EUR	140	140
Total London			15	3,885
North East				
Edmonton Waste to Energy	1999	GBP	20	30.89
Sunderland Urban Renewal	2001	GBP	75	119.33
Northumbrian Water XII	2002	GBP	100	158.86
Newcastle Hospitals PPP	2003	GBP	115	175.39
Sunderland Urban Renewal Phase II	2004	GBP	75	106.41
Total North East			5	591
Northern Ireland				
Coolkeeragh ESB Power (AFI)	2003	GBP	150	208.45
Facility for Education (N. Ireland) PPP	2004	GBP	150	215.33
Total Northern Ireland			2	424
North West (inc. Merseyside)				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	136	210.04
Ford Investment Framework-Europe	1999	EUR	600	600
Mersey Docks Liverpool	1999	GBP	15	21.25
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	7	10.51
Liverpool Schools PPP	2000	GBP	30	48.96
THFC Urban Renewal III	2000	GBP	10.75	17
North West Water XIII	2000	GBP	200	326.37
United Utilities Distrib. And Renew. Gen.	2001	GBP	97	156.12
Blackburn Hospital PPP	2002	GBP	50	82.17

Region/Project name	*Board decision*	*Currency*	*M Currency*	*M Euro*
Manchester Hospitals PPP	2002	GBP	175	285.48
Manchester Metrolink PPP-Phase 3	2003	GBP	135	194.92
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals PPP	2003	GBP	180	259.89
United Utilities Water	2004	GBP	200	291.21
Total North West (inc. Merseyside)			13	2,504
Scotland				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	100	154.44
Glasgow Schools PPP	1999	GBP	105	162.16
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	2.5	3.75
SSE Electricity Trans. and Generation	1999	GBP	200	300.17
National Power Generation	2000	GBP	45	71.17
THFC Urban Renewal III	2000	GBP	6.45	10.2
Edinburgh Schools PPP	2001	GBP	37	61.35
SSE Renewable Generation	2002	GBP	100	156.13
Glasgow Urban Renewal	2003	GBP	150	230.59
North Lanarkshire Schools PPP	2003	GBP	75	107.59
Highland Schools PPP	2004	GBP	60	89.06
Argyll and Bute Schools PPP	2004	GBP	65	96.91
Total Scotland			12	1,444
South East				
CTRL Phase 2-Section 2-PPP	1999	GBP	300	425.26
Mersey Docks Liverpool	1999	GBP	15	21.26
Isle of Grain Lng Terminal	2003	GBP	30	43.32
Total South East			3	490
South West				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	36	55.6
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	1	1.5
Wessex Water V	1999	GBP	100	152.37
South West Water IX	2000	GBP	100	172.59
THFC Urban Renewal III	2000	GBP	4.73	7.48
Wessex Water VI	2000	GBP	75	122.39
South West Water X	2003	GBP	60	87.69
Cornwall Schools PPP	2003	GBP	37.5	52.11
Total South West			8	652
Wales				
National Power Generation	2000	GBP	36	56.93
United Utilities Distrib. And Renew. Gen.	2001	GBP	3	4.83
Welsh Water (Glas Cymru) VIII	2004	GBP	35	52.65
Ford Engines RDI	2004	EUR	105	105
Total Wales			4	219
West Midlands				
Railtrack WCML Phase 1 (WCML-1)	1999	GBP	64	98.84
Severn Trent Water VIII	1999	GBP	50	77.22
Stoke-on-Trent Schools PPP	1999	GBP	40	60.95
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	1	1.5
Dudley Group of Hospitals PPP	2000	GBP	70	112.59
Birmingham Northern Relief Road PPP	2000	GBP	250	407.96
Severn Trent Water IX	2001	GBP	150	238.66
Jaguar Product Development	2002	EUR	300	300
North Staffordshire Hospitals PPP	2003	GBP	200	288.52
Land Rover Automotive Project Solihull	2003	EUR	250	250
Ford Engines RDI	2004	EUR	105	105
Total West Midlands			11	1,941
Yorkshire and the Humber				
THFC Urban Renewal II	1999	GBP	3.5	5.25
Sheffield Schools PPP	1999	GBP	29	44.79
Kirklees Schools PPP	2000	GBP	25	40.8
Yorkshire Water XI	2001	GBP	100	159.11
A1 DBFO Motorway	2002	GBP	128	208.81
Rotherham Schools PPP	2002	GBP	50	78.19
Wakefield Hospital PPP	2004	GBP	150	212.83
Finningley Airport	2004	GBP	35	49.66
Yorkshire Water XII	2004	GBP	100	143.55
Total Yorkshire and the Humber			9	943

G7 Finance Ministers' Meeting

Llew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what matters were discussed and what decisions were taken at the G7 meeting of Finance Ministers on 4 February; and if he will place in the Library copies of papers submitted to the meeting by *(a)* the United Kingdom and *(b)* other countries, that affected matters of interest to the United Kingdom. [215863]

Mr. Gordon Brown: The matters discussed at the 4–5 February G7 Finance Ministers meeting are set out in the 'Statement of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors', the 'G7 Finance Ministers Conclusions on Development', and the 'Statement on the Meeting of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors with Chinese Counterparts', all of which can be found at www.g7.gov.uk

Primate Seizure (Customs and Excise)

Mr. Banks: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the countries from which the primates seized by HM Customs and Excise since 1999 originated; [215867]

(2) what estimate his Department has made of what percentage of live primates entering the UK illegally are seized by HM Customs and Excise. [215868]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table elaborates on the information provided by the Economic Secretary on 8 November 2004, *Official Report,* column 504W, and lists the seizures of imported primates between 1999 and 2004. It includes details, where known, of the country of dispatch to the UK; this is not necessarily the country of origin.

	Number of animals	*Common name*	*Latin name*	*Country of dispatch*
1999	6 live	Mona monkeys	Cercopithecus mona	Guyana
1999	6 live	Spot nosed monkeys	Cercopithecus Spp	Guyana
1999	1 cooked monkey	Patas monkey	Erythrocebus patas	Cameroon
1999	8 parts of monkey	Not known	Not known	Congo
2000	1 live	Gibbon	Hylobates Spp	[1]—
2000	1 live	Lesser white nosed monkey	Cercopithecus petaurista	Ghana
2000	1 live	Golden cheeked gibbon	Hylobates gabriellae	[1]—
2000[2]	11 smoked monkeys	Not known	Not known	Cameroon
2001	—	—	—	—
2002	1 dried monkey	Not known	Not known	Cameroon
2002	1 monkey tail	Not known	Not known	Gambia
2002	1 baboon skull	Not known	Not known	Cameroon
2003[2]	3 baboon skulls	Hamadryas baboon	Papio hamadryas	Gambia
2003[2]	4 monkey skulls	Not known	Cercopithecus Spp	Gambia
2003	1 monkey skull	Not known	Not known	Malaysia
2004	2 baboon heads	Not known	Not known	Zimbabwe
2004	1 dried monkey	Not known	Not known	Congo
2004	3 monkey skulls	Not known	Not known	Thailand
2004	1 baboon skull	Not known	Not known	USA

[1] These seizures were made inland under powers contained in Regulation 5 of the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 (SI1997/1372).

[2] The importers in these cases were prosecuted under the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979.

Customs has also made a number of seizures under its enforcement responsibilities regarding products of animal origin, and some of these may have included meat from primates.

Customs has carried out no formal assessment of the percentage of live primates entering the UK illegally from outside the EU as analyses are already available from Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) partners. The National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit (NWCIU) produces an overall assessment covering all aspects of UK wildlife related crime; their assessment is that there is little smuggling of live primates from outside the EU direct to the UK.

Iraq

Harry Cohen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money has been charged to the Reserve in the last year for which figures are available in respect of UK operations in Iraq. [215155]

Mr. Boateng: In estimates, the Ministry of Defence drew down £1,000 million in 2002-03 and £1,539 million in 2003–04 for the costs of military operations in Iraq. These costs are met from the Reserve.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) on how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's flight in each of the past five years; [213447]

(2) how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213691]

Mr. Timms: Since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing 500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course. "Travel by Ministers" makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. Equivalent detail about domestic travel could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many letters about tax credits have been received from hon. Members by *(a)* the Inland Revenue and *(b)* Treasury Ministers in each reporting period from 2002 to 2005; and if he will make a statement. [213964]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 February 2005]:* Information on the number of letters received from hon. Members by the Inland Revenue and Treasury Ministers about tax credits in 2002–03 and 2003–04 is not available.

Between 1 April 2004 and 31 December 2004 the Inland Revenue's tax credit office handled around 6,000 letters from hon. Members, around 900 of which were received by Treasury Ministers. Information on letters from hon. Members received by the rest of the Inland Revenue about tax credits in that period is not available.

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many representations he received in December 2004 about problems relating to the overpayment of tax credits. [213388]

Dawn Primarolo: Treasury Ministers receive representations on a wide variety of issues, including tax credit overpayments. The tax credit office of the Inland Revenue also receives letters and telephone calls concerning tax credit overpayments.

Inland Revenue's policy on tax credits overpayments is set out in COP26 'What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?', a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

VAT (Colleges)

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce the level at which further education colleges pay VAT to the level paid by schools. [215622]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 1 February 2005, *Official Report;* column 762W, to the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Mr. Lidington).

Youth Unemployment (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of youth unemployment was in Coventry south in 2004. [215072]

Mr. Timms: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician. I have asked him to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Mr. Jim Cunningham, dated 10 February 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about youth unemployment in the Coventry South Parliamentary Constituency. I am replying in his absence. (215072)

It is estimated that, for the twelve month period ending February 2004, 1,000 people aged between 16 and 24 resident in the Coventry South Parliamentary Constituency were unemployed. This estimate from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) is subject to sampling variability and is rounded to the nearest thousand.

The Office for National Statistics also compiles statistics of those claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) for local areas. In the year 2004, there were, on average, 475 young people aged 18 to 24 years claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) who were resident in the Coventry South Parliamentary Constituency.

HEALTH

Accident and Emergency Services

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were blue lighted in the Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust hospital in each of the last five years. [214476]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213717]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are unaware of departmental Ministers or officials having chartered any planes.

Antiviral Drugs

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether he has stockpiled the antiviral drugs *(a)* Tamiflu and *(b)* Relenza; [211690]

(2) how many doses of *(a)* Tamiflu and *(b)* other antivirals the Government has stockpiled; and what plans his Department has to increase these stockpiles; [213139]

(3) what plans he has to maintain a supply of antiviral drugs to protect against a flu pandemic. [212224]

Miss Melanie Johnson *[holding answer 1 February 2005]:* Supplies of antivirals are available in the national health service to meet seasonal influenza demands. In addition, the Department has a national stockpile of 100,000 courses of Tamiflu and is currently reviewing arrangements for pandemic influenza, including the use of antivirals.

Cannabis

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of people were diagnosed with mental health problems directly relating to consumption of cannabis in the last year for which figures are available. [211229]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department does not collect data on the number of people who were diagnosed with mental health problems directly relating to consumption of cannabis.

Childhood Vaccines

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will remove *(a)* formaldehyde, *(b)* mercury, *(c)* foetal calf serum and *(d)* monkey kidney cells from UK childhood vaccines. [210276]

Miss Melanie Johnson: Formaldehyde is used as an inactivating agent to eliminate poliovirus infectivity. Also, it is used to inactivate diphtheria and tetanus toxins. Gluteraldehyde, a closely related chemical, is used to inactivate acellular pertussis toxins. The quantities present in the new vaccines are low, and less than 0.1 milligrams of formaldehyde and less than 0.02 mg gluteraldehyde per 0.5 millilitre dose. Formaldehyde is present naturally in the human body at levels of about 2.5 micrograms per ml of blood. For a two month old child, this is about 10 times as much as in the amount present in a single dose of vaccine. There is no evidence that these quantities pose a risk to health and there are no plans to remove these substances from vaccines.

None of the current vaccines used in the childhood immunisation programme contain mercury. Thiomersal, which releases ethylmercury, has played an important role either as a preservative or in the initial stages of the manufacture of some vaccines for over 60 years. Thiomersal was contained in the diphtheria, tetanus and whole cell pertussis (DTwP) and diphtheria and tetanus vaccines. However, with the introduction of the new vaccine Pediacel on 27 September 2004, the routine childhood immunisation programme no longer includes mercury-containing vaccines.

Foetal bovine serum is an essential growth supplement for the cells used for the propagation of live viruses. The bovine serums used have demonstrated compliance with European Union regulations for minimising the risk of transmitting animal spongiform encephalopathy agents via human and veterinary medicines. The serum is used solely in the early stage of the manufacturing process of the vaccine and is reduced to trace amounts during purification and dilution steps.

The monkey kidney cell line used for the production of inactivated poliovirus in the new vaccines has been extensively examined for contaminating viruses. The cell line meets the requirements of the World Health Organisation and European Pharmacopoeia. To exclude the risk of extraneous viral contamination each production lot is examined for contaminating viruses during the production process. The viral inactivation process has been fully validated. No monkey kidney cells are present in the final vaccine.

Engagements

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he expects to respond to the request of the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam for a meeting to discuss plans for a critical care hospital in Sutton and Cheam constituency. [215851]

Dr. Ladyman: I look forward to meeting the hon. Member on Wednesday 23 February to discuss this matter.

Dentistry

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what average length of time posts were vacant in the Community Dental Service for each year since 1997, in *(a)* England, *(b)* strategic health authorities and *(c)* primary care trusts; and what the vacancy rate was in each case. [209037]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information that is available centrally is collected in the national health service workforce vacancy survey and combines hospital, public health and community dentists. In March 2004, the vacancy rate from the survey for dental staff was 4.1 per cent. The only breakdown available is by strategic health authority (SHA). This is shown in the table.

Three monthly dental staff vacancy rates in NHS trusts by SHA areas[1] (excluding training grades)

SHA	*Percentage rate*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	6.1
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	[2]—
Essex	14.3
North West London	0.0
North Central London	0.0
North East London	3.6
South East London	2.3
South West London	0.0
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	4.1
County Durham and Tees Valley	[2]—
North and East Yorks and Northern Lincs	18.3
West Yorkshire	8.6
Cumbria and Lancashire	0.0
Greater Manchester	5.3
Cheshire and Merseyside	0.0
Thames Valley	6.8
Hampshire and Isle Of Wight	0.0
Kent and Medway	—[2]
Surrey and Sussex	0.0
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	0.0
South West Peninsula	5.3
Dorset and Somerset	0.0
South Yorkshire	6.5
Trent	9.4
Leics, Northants and Rutland	15.7
Shropshire and Staffordshire	0.0
Birmingham and The Black Country	0.0
West Midlands South	0.0
England	4.1

[1] SHA figures are based on trusts and do not necessarily reflect the geographical provision of healthcare.

[2] Figures where staff in post and number of vacancies are less than 10. Three month vacancies are vacancies as at 31 March 2004 which trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (whole-time equivalents).

Source:
Department of Health vacancies survey 2004.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have started work full-time in the NHS in response to the returning to dentistry campaign. [211729]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 31 January 2005]:* The returning to dentistry campaign was aimed primarily at people returning from a career break who want to return to work part-time. We have been informed of 65 dentists who have returned to national health service dentistry since April 2004, equating to 37 whole-time equivalent dentists. We do not collect information on which of these people returned to work in response to the Keeping In Touch scheme (ongoing) or the returning to dentistry campaign, which began at the end of June 2004.

Mr. Chidgey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps his Department is taking to improve NHS dentistry in the Eastleigh area. [214574]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 9 February 2005]:* We are investing an extra £368 million in national health service dentistry, recruiting 1,000 more dentists by October 2005 and reforming the dental system to improve the long-term oral health of the nation. For 2005–06, this will increase the funds available for NHS dentistry by over 19 per cent. over the 2003–04 expenditure.

In 2004–05, the Department has allocated a total of £50 million to strategic health authorities (SHAs) to support access. Of this sum, £1.5 million has been allocated to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA, to improve access, choice and quality in NHS dentistry.

Eastleigh and Test Valley South Primary Care Trust has developed a dental action plan and has received £176,000 to take this forward.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps he is taking to improve access to NHS dentists in Hendon. [207946]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We have undertaken a review of the dental primary care workforce in consultation with representatives of the dental profession—professional bodies, dental academics, as well as the British Dental Association. The National Health Service workforce will be increased by the equivalent of 1,000 dentists by October 2005, allowing up to an extra two million people to be treated nationally.

By April 2006, primary care trusts (PCTs) will be responsible for securing the provision of primary dental care services, either through a contract with an individual practices or by providing services themselves. PCTs, including those within London, have been drawing up local dentistry action plans setting out how they are using their proportion of the £59 million additional funding we have allocated to improve access to NHS dentistry this year, and their priorities for commissioning in 2005–06.

Barnet PCT is also preparing for the new dental contract by working to develop an oral health and dental strategy aimed at improving the oral health of the local population, tackling health inequalities and supporting and planning dental services. This will allow the PCT to support and develop primary dental services in a proactive and co-ordinated Way.

There are currently 208 general dental practitioners in Barnet PCT. This includes dentists, orthodontists and vocational trainee dentists providing NHS general dentist services from 87 practices. Barnet PCT has received an allocation in 2004–05 of £309,000 from the Department to support improved access and quality of dental services and there were 884 additional patient registrations between March and September 2004.

Barnet PCT also has a dental access centre which is located in the walk-in centre at Edgware Community Hospital.

Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was granted to the Dorset and Somerset strategic health authority for *(a)* capital improvements and *(b)* capital new build in each of the last eight years; and what the budget is for the coming financial year. [214610]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Draper Report

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when he expects the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines, to be published; [214532]

(2) when the data on which the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines is based was first received by his Department; and if he will make a statement; [214533]

(3) what assessment his Department has made of the data on which the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines is based; and if he will make a statement; [214534]

(4) what discussions his Department has held with *(a)* charities, *(b)* patient groups, *(c)* other organisations and *(d)* representatives of the power industry regarding the potential implications of the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines; [214535]

(5) if he will place in the Library a copy of the data on which the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines is based; [214536]

(6) if he will list the organisations with whom his Department has held meetings regarding the implications of the Draper Report on childhood cancer and electromagnetic field exposures from powerlines. [214537]

Miss Melanie Johnson: A draft paper by Dr. Draper of Childhood Cancer Research Group at Oxford University into possible links between power lines and childhood leukaemia was submitted to a scientific journal and officials in the Department in November 2004. In accordance with the usual practice, publication will follow the appropriate peer review process and the publication date rests with the publishers. It would be inappropriate to comment on unpublished data, but we will ask the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) to consider the results when published.

The NRPB's "Advice on Limiting Exposure to Electromagnetic Fields" (Documents of the NRPB Vol 15 No 2 2004) noted that below the guidelines

> "an association between prolonged exposure to intense power frequency magnetic fields and a small raised risk of childhood leukaemia has, however, been found, the scientific reasons for which are presently uncertain. In the light of these findings and the requirement for additional research, the need for precautionary measures should be considered by Government".

On the basis of this commendation precautionary measures are currently being considered by departmental officials in association with a large number of stakeholders including other Government Departments, the devolved administrations, the electricity supply industry, the electricity supply regulators and a number of non-government organisations and public concern groups.

Drug Addicts/Misuse

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether he has made a comparative assessment of the social outcomes for drug users who are under treatment with *(a)* methadone and *(b)* buprenorphine; and if he will make a statement. [214277]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has not commissioned any assessments comparing drug users who are under treatment with methadone, and those under treatment with buprenorphine, specifically in relation to social outcome.

We recognise that there are both advantages and disadvantages for each treatment method. The choice for patients must be determined by the professional prescribing the treatment, taking all the circumstances of individual cases into account.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have received treatment for drug abuse in Coventry, South in the last 12 months. [215071]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not collected centrally. However, it is available from the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System, which is now managed by the National Treatment Agency for Substance Misuse. Their latest relevant publication (30 September 2004) is at: http://www.nta.nhs.uk.

Drug Treatment

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate he has made of the percentage of people living within a 50 mile radius of Government-funded drug rehabilitation facilities. [211227]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We have not made a formal estimate of the percentage of people in England living within a 50 mile radius of Government funded drug rehabilitation facilities.

However, as drug action teams have responsibility for ensuring that their local populations have access to all forms of drug treatment, we would not expect anyone in England to be more than 50 miles from a Government funded drug rehabilitation scheme.

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will make a statement on provision of drug treatment in Somerset. [214472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In line with our policy of Shifting the Balance of Power, it is now for primary care trusts (PCTs) in partnership with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services for local people. We recognise that health services are better when management is devolved to the frontline. Within the framework set out in the NHS Plan and other policy documents, PCTs with their specialised knowledge of the local community are effectively able to manage and improve local services.

I understand that in Somerset, the Somerset Partnership NHS and Social Care Trust are commissioned to provide specialist drugs services through their Somerset drugs service and complementary rehabilitation services are provided by the charity, Turning Point.

In order to promote comprehensive provision for those requiring rehabilitation, specialist services and primary care services are increasingly provided through shared care arrangements. In such arrangements general medical practitioners are supported by specialist providers, such as the Somerset drugs service, in providing clinically safe and effective specialist services based in a primary care setting, for individuals with complex needs. The South Somerset PCT is the lead organisation for primary care drug rehabilitation provision in Somerset.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for a residential drugs rehabilitation place in Lancashire is. [213907]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The average waiting time for a drug rehabilitation place in Lancashire was three weeks in December 2004.

Source:

National Treatment Agency

Elective Surgery

Rob Marris: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research his Department has commissioned regarding the complication rates following elective surgery paid for by the NHS and carried out in *(a)* NHS hospitals and *(b)* private hospitals. [211698]

Mr. Hutton: No specific research has been commissioned by the Department. However, the national confidential inquiry into patient outcome and death (NCEPOD), which is managed by National Institute for Clinical Excellence on behalf of the Department, reviews medical clinical practices and makes recommendations to improve the quality of the delivery of care. It does not however compare national health service hospitals with private hospitals. The reports are on their website www.ncepod.org.uk.

Infertility Treatment

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many primary care trusts in England offer women at least one cycle of IVF treatment on the NHS; and if he will make a statement. [213475]

Miss Melanie Johnson: We do not collect this information centrally. We commissioned the clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems from the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) because we recognised that provision of in vitro fertilisation (IVF) is variable between primary care trusts (PCTs). We have welcomed the guideline, published in February 2004, and we have advised PCTs who provide no IVF treatment to meet a minimum national level of provision of one cycle by 1 April 2005. In the longer term we expect the national health service to make progress to full implementation of the NICE guideline.

LIFT Programme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if he will estimate the total cost of the NHS LIFT programme to date. [215849]

Mr. Hutton: Capital for National Health Service Local Improvement Finance Trusts (LIFT) is provided through private finance. 33 schemes have reached financial close with an estimated capital value of £433 million, for their initial schemes. 18 further schemes are in various stages of procurement and it is not possible to estimate a value for them.

Three schemes have also closed on their second wave of buildings and their combined capital value is estimated at £60 million.

The Government have to date made available, from public sources, £177.9 million of enabling funds.

As new LIFT buildings open, primary care trusts are meeting the financial consequences of this from their revenue allocations. Information on this spend is not held centrally.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans he has to extend the NHS LIFT programme to cover dental practices; and if he will make a statement. [215850]

Mr. Hutton: National Health Service Local Improvement Finance Trusts (LIFTs) provide improved primary care facilities for primary care trusts, to support the delivery of services required by their local population, which could include dentistry. Three of the five new LIFT buildings, in East London, Barnsley and Wigan, include, or are planning to include, provision for dentistry.

Mental Health Care

Mr. Flook: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average waiting time is for a mental health appointment in Somerset; [214477]

(2) how many people consulted an NHS mental health doctor in Somerset in each of the last five years. [214478]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not collected centrally.

National Institute for Clinical Excellence

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many reports the National Institute for Clinical Excellence has produced in the last five years. [208358]

(2) how many new *(a)* technologies and *(b)* treatments the National Institute for Clinical Excellence has recommended in the last five years. [208359]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since the establishment of the National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) in 1999, it has published 86 technology appraisals, 23 clinical guidelines and 99 pieces of guidance on the safety and efficacy of interventional procedures (as of January 2005). Many NICE guidance publications address more than one technology or treatment.

To date, hundreds of thousands of people have benefited from the guidance produced by NICE. Its guidance has spanned a wide range of important topics, including technologies to tackle major killers, such as cancer and coronary heart disease. NICE itself is recognised as a world leader in its field and its methodologies for health technology assessment have been commended by the World Health Organisation Further information on the work of NICE is freely available on its website at www.nice.org.uk.

The Department does not hold detailed information on the number of new drugs and treatments covered by NICE guidance.

Parking

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on *(a)* provision of parking spaces for civil servants and *(b)* parking tickets and penalties incurred by civil servants in the Department in each year since 1997. [213808]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The expenditure incurred by the Department on the specific provision of car parking spaces for civil servants is shown in the table.

	Amount (£)
1997	1,000
1998	1,000
1999	1,000
2000	1,000
2001	1,000
2002	0
2003	900
2004	2,240

It is departmental policy not to reimburse the cost of parking tickets or penalties for staff.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Chichester on 6 December 2004, ref. 202257. [210494]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have replied to the hon. Member today.

Performance Measurement

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health from what sources the data for measuring performance against standards on medicine review in *(a)* the National Service Framework for Older People and *(b)* the GP contract are drawn; and what the frequency of collection is in each case. [209801]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1118–119W.

Prevenar

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the vaccine Prevenar will be available on the NHS; [209816]

(2) what recent representations he has received on the effectiveness of Prevenar in preventing pneumococcal disease; [209817]

(3) what the findings were of the research commissioned by the Department on the effectiveness of the vaccine Prevenar. [209818]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has recommended in principle the introduction of pneumococcal vaccine for children, subject to further consideration. Full details can be found at http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/jcvi/index.htm.

Since our meeting last year, I have received a total of 10 letters and questions from hon. and right hon. Members on Prevenar.

The JCVI has considered information published in the scientific literature on the effectiveness of Prevenar and also considered some currently unpublished surveillance data on the impact of Prevenar used in the United States.

In addition, phase II clinical trials were carried out with a nine-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine to investigate whether the same level of protection could be achieved when the vaccine was given at two, three and four months of age (at the same time as the meningitis C conjugate vaccine) compared with the US primary schedule at two, four and six months of age. The results of this study showed that good protection was achieved using the two, three and four months schedule.

A two-dose primary immunisation schedule of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine given at two and four months was also compared to the three-dose schedule. The results of the trials supported the use of a two-dose primary immunisation schedule, with each dose separated by two months, in the first four months of life. The data also supported a single dose catch up programme for children aged one year and over.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [202257]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This table shows details of all domestic journeys taken by special advisers, between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

	Journey	*Cost (£)*	*Air/rail*
16 May 2003	London/Doncaster	92.00	Rail
16 May 2003	London/London-Heathrow Airport	21.00	Rail
21 May 2003	London/Chester	233.00	Rail
19 June 2003	London/Watford	16.80	Rail
1 July 2003	London/Witham	38.00	Rail
18 July 2003	London/Welwyn Garden City	12.00	Rail
22 July 2003	London/York	108.50	Rail
23 July 2003	Leeds/London	107.00	Rail
13 August 2003	London/Manchester	269.00	Rail
5 September 2003	London/Newcastle	127.00	Rail
10 September 2003	London/Brighton	42.20	Rail
12 September 2003	London/Derby	54.45	Rail
12 September 2003	Nottingham/London	54.45	Rail
22 September 2003	London/Cardiff	111.00	Rail
29 September 2003	London/Birmingham	96.20	Rail
9 October 2003	London/London	60.00	Rail
15 October 2003	London/Brighton	42.20	Rail
5 November 2003	London/Maidenhead	21.60	Rail
5 November 2003	London/Maidstone	35.00	Rail
13 November 2003	London/Manchester	134.50	Rail
14 November 2003	London/Brighton	21.10	Rail
20 November 2003	London/London-Heathrow Airport	42.00	Rail
21 November 2003	London/Coventry	144.00	Rail
28 November 2003	London/Liverpool	256.00	Rail
5 December 2003	London/Cosham	36.10	Rail
5 December 2003	Southampton/London	41.20	Rail
5 December 2003	Newcastle/Durham	4.10	Rail
13 January 2004	London/Hull	194.00	Rail
22 January 2004	London/Manchester	280.00	Rail
23 February 2004	London/Birmingham	167.00	Rail
1 March 2004	London/Peterborough	80.00	Rail
2 March 2004	London/Manchester	283.00	Rail
4 March 2004	London/Birmingham	167.00	Rail
5 March 2004	London/Leicester	45.90	Rail
5 March 2004	London/Durham	92.50	Rail

	Journey	*Cost (£)*	*Air/rail*
9 March 2004	London/Derby	56.70	Rail
9 March 2004	Nottingham/London	56.70	Rail
11 March 2004	London/Birmingham	167.00	Rail
26 March 2004	London/New Malden	3.20	Rail
27 March 2004	New Malden/Leicester	56.00	Rail
30 March 2004	London/Basildon	8.20	Rail
4 April 2003	Leeds-Bradford/London	131.00	Air
	Liverpool/London	294.00	Air
	London/Manchester	487.00	Air
	London/Newcastle	178.00	Air
	Total	4,967.60	—

This table shows details of all journeys abroad taken by Special Advisers, between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004.

	Journey	*Cost (£)*	*Rail/air*
21 October 2003	London/Washington	4,229.00	Air
16 May 2003	London/Washington	510.00	Air
	Total	4,739.00	

Teenage Sex

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what part the teaching of abstinence in regard to sexual activity plays in Government policy on sexual health; and if he will make a statement. [210531]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

The Government believe that all young people should receive a balanced programme of sex and relationships education (SRE) at school, which encourages them to delay sexual activity until they are ready and prepares them to make responsible choices about their relationships when they do become sexually active.

In 2000, DfES issued non-statutory guidance to schools on the teaching of SRE. Schools are required to adhere to the principles set out in the guidance, although the exact content of each school's programme—and the resources used to support its delivery—are a matter for individual schools, following consultation with governors, parents and students.

The guidance recommends that SRE is delivered within the framework for Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and should help young people to develop: positive attitudes and values: the personal and social skills needed to manage relationships; and a knowledge and understanding of issues related to their sexual health.

Variant CJD

Mr. Greenway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions he has had with the Medical Research Council on research into effective treatments for variant CJD. [213863]

Miss Melanie Johnson: The Department has been in frequent contact with the Medical Research Council since 2001 in relation to the establishment of a clinical trial of quinacrine as a potential treatment for all forms of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease(CJD). The trial is now under way. At the Department's request, the MRC is offering standardised clinical monitoring to those patients who choose to receive treatment with pentosan polysulphate.

In September 2004, the Chief Medical Officer asked the MRC to take responsibility for the CJD therapy advisory group, which has a remit to review research on potential treatments, and advise on priorities for clinical trial.

The Department has also asked the joint MRC/Department of Health research advisory group to review research on treatments during 2005.

Women's Bleeding Disorders

Mr. Connarty: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* activities and *(b)* methods his Department is adopting to make (i) women and (ii) the medical profession aware of the possibility that the von Willebrand's form of haemophilia can be the cause of women's bleeding disorders. [210126]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply that I gave on 18 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 873–74W.

TRANSPORT

A5 (Dunstable)

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Dunstable A5 Queue Relocation Scheme, known as the Green Wave, cost. [215853]

Mr. Jamieson: The cost of the Dunstable A5 Queue Relocation Scheme, including works, supervision, preparation and design, is £2.032 million.

A628

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the necessary statutory processes and value-for-money assessments to be completed in relation to the Glossop Spur of the A628 Mottram to Tintswistle Bypass. [215840]

Mr. Darling: The timetable for publishing draft Orders and taking forward the necessary statutory processes for this scheme is a matter for Tameside Metropolitan borough council, as local highway authority.

Once these processes are complete, it will be for Tameside to submit a revised scheme appraisal for consideration by my Department.

Aviation Emissions Tax

Mr. Simon Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will urge his EU counterparts to agree to a tax on aviation emissions. [214670]

Charlotte Atkins: The "Future of Air Transport" White Paper recognises the importance of ensuring that aviation meets its external costs, including its environmental costs. The UK has made it clear that tackling climate change will be a priority for our presidency of the EU in 2005. We believe that the best way of ensuring that aviation contributes towards the goal of climate stabilisation would be through a well-designed emissions trading regime. The European Commission has recently commissioned a study to look at options for aviation participating in the EU emission trading scheme. We intend to press for the inclusion of intra-EU air services in the EU scheme from 2008, or as soon as possible thereafter, and to make this a priority for our EU presidency. However, we will also continue to explore and discuss options for the use of other economic instruments.

Car-share Scheme

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps will be taken to prevent mannequins being used to deceive enforcers of the motorway car-share scheme when it is introduced. [215899]

Mr. Jamieson: We are keen to ensure that the design of the proposed car-sharing lane on the Ml motorway between Luton and St. Albans encourages compliance and that the system is as self-enforcing as possible. However experience at other sites both in this country and abroad suggests that some police or other official presence will be required for part of the time and we anticipate using this method of enforcement.

Civil Servants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211689]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department for Transport was created following a Machinery of Government change in May 2002 and figures for years prior to 2002–03 are not available.

The Department has provided for future annual compensation payments to former employees who have taken early retirement. Compensation is payable from the date of retirement until age 60.

The combined committed costs for early departures in the Department for Transport, including the Agencies, are as follows:

	£
2002–03	2,291,064
2003–04	2,511,104
2004–05	[1]7,813,836
2005–06	[1]2,363,800
2006–07	[1]1,815,000
2007–08	[1]1,371,000

[1] Estimate.

In addressing its headcount pressures, the Department has approached HM Treasury for an additional £15 million to fund early departures in 2005–06.

Coastguard (Swanage)

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects negotiations for the construction of a new coastguard station at Swanage to be completed. [215844]

Mr. Darling: Negotiations about the development of a new facility are continuing between the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and the local authority. It hopes to conclude those negotiations soon.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the Swanage coastguard operation. [215845]

Mr. Darling: The Auxiliary Coastguard Team in the Swanage area do excellent work for the local community. The Maritime and Coastguard Agency will continue to provide an Auxiliary Coastguard Service in the Swanage area and is exploring the possibility of upgrading the facilities used by the Team.

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total expenditure by his Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211669]

Charlotte Atkins: The Department was formed in May 2002. Detail of expenditure and estimated costs in future years for the central Department and agencies are shown in the following table.

£ million

Organisation	*Expenditure*		*Estimated costs*		
	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Central Department	58.5	40.74	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Highways Agency	273.9	277.1	278.0	278.0	278.0
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency	2.9	5.1	3.2	2.0	[1]—
Driving standards Agency	3.0	2.6	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Marine and Coastguard Agency	0.7	0.5	0.6	[1]—	[1]—
Vehicle and Operator Services Agency	3.0	2.0	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Vehicle Certification Agency	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1

[1] Current central Department or agency planning processes do not provide this level of detail.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to freedom of information requests since January. [215227]

Mr. McNulty: Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, all public authorities have a publication scheme that gives details of the classes of information that an authority makes available proactively and how they are accessible. Guidance on publication schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and non-departmental public bodies should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the publication scheme where appropriate.

The Department is following this policy and is publishing in the freedom of information part of its website the information disclosed in responses to requests that it considers of wider interest. Where the information disclosed in responses is not available in electronic form, the Department lists it on the website with details of how to view it. The Department puts the information it has disclosed in context but for privacy reasons does not identify the person who made the request to which it relates. This policy does not include placing copies of the information disclosed in responses in the Library.

Great Yarmouth Harbour

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the public funding approved for the outer harbour for Great Yarmouth will have to be referred to the European Commission for approval under provisions relating to state aid. [215841]

Mr. Darling: If Ministers agree to the East of England Development Agency's request to invest funding in the outer harbour, the project will then be submitted to the European Commission who decide whether or not the awarding of public subsidy complies with State Aid law.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the decision to approve public funding for the outer harbour for Great Yarmouth was based on *(a)* regeneration, *(b)* economic and *(c)* commercial grounds. [215842]

Mr. Darling: Public funding for the East Port project has yet to be approved. In my view, there is no strong transport case for public funding but the business case made for EastPort has shown the potential to deliver benefits sufficient to justify the public funding proposed. In such circumstances I have concluded that transport considerations should not stand in the way of a favourable decision on this important project. It now falls to the Department of Trade and Industry, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the local authorities concerned to decide whether public funding should be made available.

Hatfield Peverel-Witham Link Road

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the proposed Hatfield Peverel to Witham link road. [215119]

Mr. Jamieson: The objectives of the improvement scheme are to provide safer access to and from the A12 by improving the junction arrangements at Hatfield Peverel and Witham, providing adequate space for traffic to merge and weave, and to reduce congestion by separating the existing local traffic between Hatfield Peverel and Witham from the A12.

Further to the outcome of the public inquiry into proposals for a link road on the south side of the A12 held in 2003, the Highways Agency has reviewed all viable options. Several are now being looked at in more detail and assessment work should be completed by early summer.

Hauliers

Brian Cotter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action he has taken in relation to the illegal sale of international operators' licences for hauliers through the trade press. [215789]

Mr. Jamieson: This matter is the subject of an ongoing investigation by the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). I will arrange for VOSA's Chief Executive to write to the hon. Member once the investigation is concluded and for a copy to be placed in the Library of the House.

Highways Agency

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of road the Highways Agency plans *(a)* to build and *(b)* to repair in each of the next three financial years; and if he will make a statement. [215729]

Mr. Jamieson: The Highways Agency plan to build 84 miles of road over the next three financial years (2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08). This includes 64 miles of widening and 20 miles of bypasses.

With regard to repairs, the Highways Agency is currently optimising its road renewal programme for the next three years, following the spending review 2004 settlement. While a detailed programme of works is not known at this time the Highways Agency estimates that approximately 1,100 lane miles of trunk road will be repaired annually for each of the three years (as stated above), subject to the availability of funding.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. will allow for unforeseen additional works to be carried out; and if he will make a statement. [215734]

Mr. Jamieson: My Department does not have a contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. All my Department's DBFO contracts make provision for additional works and other additional services. Where my Department through its highways agency proposes additional works to be carried out it notifies the DBFO Company of such an intention by means of an additional works notice:

> The additional works notice includes a description and/or specification of the additional works.
>
> The specification should include the time by which the proposed additional works are to be completed.
>
> The additional works notice should specify the additional works services (if any), which the Secretary of State requires the DBFO Co. to perform in respect of the additional works.
>
> The additional works notice should also specify the time by which any comments from the DBFO Company on the contents of the additional works notice must be received.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. allows for changes to be made to the per vehicle charge. [215735]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have a contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. The shadow tolls payments in the 30-year contract between the Secretary of State and UK Highways (M40) Ltd. are calculated annually and indexed to protect the contractors against inflation using the retail price index as the basic factor. Inevitably this index will have performed slightly differently to the estimates made in 1996, but we are confident that the variations are modest.

A detailed reconciliation of the outturn figures against forecast is proposed for 2006 and it will revisit the value for money calculations made for the life of the contract.

The actual payments are reviewed at the end of each financial year and the amount is recalculated using the traffic flow for the past 12 months. A recovery or additional payment is then made.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what provision he has made to allow for the review of the contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd. [215736]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have any contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Ltd. Performance of the contract is reviewed on an ongoing basis but there are no provisions for formal contract review.

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how environmental objectives and criteria were dealt with in the contract between the Highways Agency and Highway Services (UK) Ltd; and if he will make a statement. [215737]

Mr. Jamieson: The Secretary of State does not have any contract with the company mentioned but the M40 DBFO contract is with UK Highways (M40) Limited. The contract required the company to incorporate into the construction all of the environmental features included in the approved design. The attached extract from the Design, Build, Finance and Operate Contract between the Secretary of State for Transport and UK Highways (M40) Ltd. details further general and specific environmental terms.

"*Core Operation and Maintenance Requirements*

In the design, planning and execution of all works and functions associated with the operation and maintenance of the Project Facilities, the DBFO Co. shall take all such action and do all such things (including, without limitation, organising itself, adopting measures and standards, executing procedures, including inspection procedures and safety patrols, and engaging and managing contractors, agents and employees) as will and in such manner as will secure risk of adverse effects on the environment and on the amenity enjoyed by the owners and occupiers of land adjacent to the Project Road and to adjoining roads and facilities is minimised.

Scheme Specific Core Operation and Maintenance Requirements

The DBFO Co. shall cultivate and maintain the landscaped areas of the Project Road so as to enhance the appearance and aesthetic quality of the Project Road and to mitigate its adverse environmental effects.

The DBFO Co. shall operate and maintain the Site and the Operation and Maintenance Adjacent Areas so as to enhance nature conservation."

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what priority the Highways Agency gives to environmental criteria in deciding whether to approve works on *(a)* motorways and *(b)* other trunk roads. [215739]

Mr. Jamieson: Works undertaken by the Highways Agency on trunk roads and motorways are subject to appraisal against a range of criteria before they are approved to proceed. Within this appraisal, environmental criteria are given equal prominence alongside other criteria such as road safety and economic performance.

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213644]

Charlotte Atkins: Total expenditure on staff magazines for the central Department and the executive agencies from 2002–03 onwards is given in the table. Figures for previous years would cover the work of the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions and the Department for the Environment, Transport and the Regions and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The six executive agencies are the Highways Agency, the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA), the Driving Standards Agency (DSA), the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) and the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA).

£

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
DfT Central	64,000	80,000	72,000
Highways Agency	127,000	119,000	72,000
VOSA	8,506	10,628	10,222
DSA	19,520	17,562	18,975
MCA	Nil	Nil	Nil
DVLA	64,809	48,281	44,776
VCA	2,100	2,500	6,500

[1] Estimated

M40

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what projections of *(a)* traffic volumes and *(b)* road noise were made in respect of the M40 through Stokenchurch and Lane End at the time of the road's widening in 1991; what the most recent figures are for each; and if he will make a statement. [215738]

Mr. Jamieson: The M40 passes through the Chilterns between junctions 4 and 5. This stretch of motorway was widened in 1990–91. Traffic and noise projections will have been produced as part of the preparation for this widening scheme. The Highways Agency holds some historical records for past motorway and trunk road schemes and an extensive search of its archives have produced extracts which are available in the Libraries of the House.

The noise related figures are taken from a report commissioned in 1988 and the traffic figures are taken from a report of the feasibility study in 1987. Both of these reports were commissioned prior to the widening scheme commencing.

The most recent figures for traffic flows are 94,000 vpd (approx 47,000 in each direction. The Highways Agency does not have current noise levels adjacent to the motorway as these are not monitored.

Motor Toll Systems (England)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the motor toll systems in operation in England. [213341]

Mr. Jamieson: Following is a list of statutory tolled undertakings in England:

Aldwark Bridge
Bournemouth-Swanage Motor Road and Ferry
Clifton Suspension Bridge
Dartmouth-Kingswear Floating Bridge
Dunham Bridge
Humber Bridge
Itchen Bridge
Lynmouth and Lynton Lift
M6 Toll Road
Mersey Tunnels
Rixton and Warburton Bridge
Severn River Crossing
Shrewsbury (Kingsland) Bridge
Swinford Bridge
Tamar Bridge
Tyne Tunnel
Whitchurch Bridge
Whitney on Wye Bridge

The list does not include the Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing and the Sadler Street, Durham charging schemes. Both of these are road user charging schemes enabled under the provisions of the Transport Act 2000.

There are also a number of small private unregulated tolled undertakings; two of which are allowed to toll by Royal Charter, the others are on private land. There is no central record of all these private undertakings.

Private Car Parks

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what restrictions are applicable to private companies operating within private car parks that issue fines for alleged offences; and if he will make a statement; [215995]

(2) if he will issue guidelines to private companies which impose fines for alleged offences in a private car park that penalty notices should be placed on the vehicle at the alleged time of the offence; and if he will make a statement. [216006]

Charlotte Atkins: Privately owned car parks are private property and charges and conditions for their use are a contractual matter between the owner and users. This is not a matter that is the subject of public legislation concerning fines and it would be for the owner to pursue any unpaid charges as a civil rather than criminal matter. The Secretary of State has no powers to issue guidelines on the management of private car parks. When using a private car park a motorist is effectively agreeing to abide by the terms and conditions of its use, which should be displayed clearly.

Mrs. Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport under what circumstances the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is allowed to issue details of car ownership to private companies who operate within private car parks and issue fines for alleged offences; and what assessment his Department has made of whether the issuing of such information is compliant with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. [215996]

Mr. Jamieson: Regulations provide for the release of vehicle keeper details from the register maintained by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency to applicants who can demonstrate "reasonable cause" for their request. The enforcement of parking restrictions on private property meets the "reasonable cause" criterion. If information was not released in these circumstances landlords would have great difficulty in enforcing their rights to their property. The Information Commissioner is aware that personal data is used in this way and he has issued advice, which is available on his website.

Railways

Mr. Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much the Government expects to spend in overall improvements including safety improvements, to the Rail Network over the next five years; [209430]

(2) how much money the Government have invested in the Rail Network since May 1997. [209431]

Mr. McNulty: Historic and forecast public spending on all modes of transport is set out in table A3 of "Transport 2010 The 10 Year Plan" published in July 2000 as supplemented by table A1.1 of "Delivering Better Transport: Progress Report" published in December 2002.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has today made a statement setting out the funding levels for rail for the remainder of Network Rail's current regulatory control period.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the opening of Buckshaw Village railway station. [215532]

Mr. McNulty: The Strategic Rail Authority is currently awaiting further work by Lancashire county council to assess the viability of the council's proposal to open a station at Buckshaw Village.

Road Maintenance

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on local authorities' obligations to keep pavements and highways in a good state of repair. [215957]

Charlotte Atkins: The Highways Act 1980 places a duty on highway authorities to maintain footways and highways in a safe condition, taking into account the nature of these roads and the traffic that could reasonably be expected to use them.

The Department for Transport strongly recommends that local authorities maintain their highways in accordance with the Code of Practice for Maintenance Management "Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance", published in 2001.

Speed Cameras (Accidents)

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of road traffic accidents occurred on or near to the calibration lines of speed cameras in the last 12 months for which figures are available. [214363]

Mr. Jamieson: The specific information requested is not available. But "The National safety camera programme—Three year evaluation report", carried out by University College London and PA Consulting Group, found that there had been a 40 per cent. reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured at camera sites, and a 33 per cent. reduction in the total number of personal injury collisions at camera sites. The report was published in June 2004. Copies are available in the Library and from the Department's website.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213786]

Charlotte Atkins: The information requested is not collected centrally in the form requested and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Traffic

Mr. Boris Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research his Department has commissioned into headway control as a means of controlling traffic density and congestion. [215621]

Mr. Jamieson: Several research projects into headway control as a means of controlling traffic density, in addition to reducing congestion and improving safety have been undertaken in the past five years.

Research was undertaken by TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) into the Highways Agency's M25 Controlled Motorway Scheme between 1995 and 2002.

The Highways Agency's TRISHA (Traffic Responsive Speed and Headway Adaptation) project in 2000 assessed the impacts arising from intelligent speed and headway control within vehicles.

The Highways Agency contributed to the EC research project ADVISORS, which assessed the traffic, safety and environmental implications of different in-vehicle driver assistance systems.

In 2001 the Highways Agency commissioned consultants to undertake an assessment of driver attitudes to in-vehicle driver assistance systems, including headway control.

Details of the Highways Agency's research are available in published reports or from the Agency's website (www.highways.gov.uk).

Travel Costs

Mr. Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total travel costs to his Department have been for *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* officials for each year since 1997. [203779]

Charlotte Atkins *[holding answer 9 December 2004]*: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002. The total travel and subsistence costs for officials in the Department for Transport in 2002–03 were £1,606,589, and in 2003–04 were £1,919,678. Information for earlier years is not readily available. Travel costs for Ministers' and special advisers are not held centrally within the Department.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will reply to the letter dated 15 November from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Samiul Alam. [215125]

Mr. Mullin: I refer my right hon. Friend to the replies I gave him on 19 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 1018W, 27 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 523W and 7 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1310W.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will send a substantive reply to the letter dated 8 December 2004, ref. GV100/90815/H post ref. 74117 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood. [215153]

Mr. Mullin: UKvisas, the department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, replied to my right hon. Friend on 3 February.

Departmental Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the Department were in each year since 1997. [213801]

Mr. Alexander: There are 20 main training providers in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). They centrally arrange more than 200 different courses for staff at both internal and external venues. The FCO also encourages its directorates and diplomatic posts to take responsibility for further enhancing specialist job and/or personal development skills. These activities are paid from local funds, for which no centrally held records are kept.

	Costs of training (£)
1997–98	6,261,972
1998–99	7,233,036
1999–2000	6,671,147
2000–01	9,874,047
2001–02	11,331,631
2002–03	9,772,578
2003–04	13,118,950

Centrally held records on the costs of staff training and development days held away from the Department cover activities run by the central FCO training department, based in London. Readily accessible records are only available from April 2000.

£

	Training courses[1]	*Development*[1]
		£
	Training courses[1]	*Development*[1]
2000–01	1,160,258	177,277
2001–02	1,250,186	326,820
2002–03	1,431,207	475,233
2003–04	1,247,524	142,264

[1] Centrally run

The FCO training provision is recorded on a variety of management information systems. Further figures could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the EEC-Slovenia Co-operation Committee met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215442]

Mr. MacShane: We can find no information on an EEC-Slovenia Cooperation Committee. Slovenia formally joined the EU prior to the Dutch presidency and had been accepted as an EU member prior to the Italian and Irish presidency.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Joint Committee (EEC-Turkey) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [215443]

Mr. MacShane: We believe the question refers to the EU-Turkey Association Committee, which meets once a year. During the period of the Italian, Irish and Dutch presidencies (June 2003-December 2004) it met in March 2004, in Brussels. An official from the Department for Trade and Industry attended.

European Public Bodies

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list its publications and newsletters published over that period. [215229]

Mr. Pond: I have been asked to reply.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working conditions was established in 1975 by the EU Council of Ministers to provide research-based information on the improvement of living and working conditions. This includes comparative cross-European research on employment and unemployment, equal opportunities, social inclusion, health in the workplace and employment relations. As well as commissioning research through open tender the foundation is active in disseminating research-based information through publications, conferences and seminars throughout the member states. The foundation is active across all of these areas in all member states of the EU including the UK.

A full listing of its activities across the EU, its publications and newsletters, are set out on their website (www.eurofound.ie) and all are downloadable in full text as well as summary form.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Training Foundation in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list their publications and newsletters published over that period. [215237]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The European Training Foundation (ETF) is an EU agency set up to assist EU neighbour countries, including EU candidate countries, with the development of their vocational education and training (VET) systems to improve employability and mobility within their economies.

The ETF has published several reports describing progress made within VET systems in Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the former candidate countries during 2004. These publications, including ETF newsletters which are published on a bi-monthly basis, can be accessed via the ETF website: www.etf.eu.int

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215218]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is mounting on its website a selection of the information released in response to access requests under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act since January 2005. A dedicated FOI website for the FCO will be going live later this month. Meanwhile, the information can be found on the FOI pages of the main FCO website (www.fco.gov.uk). This week, for example, information is being displayed concerning the International Criminal Court and meetings of the European Council in 1979 and 1984.

It would not be appropriate to place on the website or in the Library of the House copies of all the information released, some of which has relevance and significance only to the individual who requested it. Where the information concerned is of broader and more general interest and importance, it will be placed on the FCO website. Copies of significant documents may also be placed in the Library of the House.

Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and non-departmental public bodies should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Intelligence Gathering

Mr. Pope: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 940W, on torture-obtained information, on how many occasions in the last three years concerns have been expressed to him regarding the means by which the intelligence it received had been obtained. [215146]

Mr. Straw: There have been a number of parliamentary questions and some correspondence from hon. Members and members of the public on this issue. We hold no exact figures on such correspondence.

The UK strongly opposes torture as a matter of fundamental principle. The British intelligence and security services operate strictly in accordance with statutory provisions and requirements laid down by Parliament. Those requirements take full account of obligations under international law.

Iran/Syria

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of reports of support for terrorist groups by the governments of *(a)* Iran and *(b)* Syria; and if he will make a statement. [215539]

Mr. Straw: We have serious concerns about the approach of both the Iranian and the Syrian governments to terrorism. We have pressed both countries to co-operate fully with international efforts to combat terrorism and not to support groups trying to undermine peace in the Middle East by violent means.

I raised these concerns with the Syrian Foreign Minister in October 2004, and with the Secretary General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Hassan Rouhani, in December 2004; and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Ministers and Officials continue to do so.

Ministerial Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent on official ministerial *(a)* business cards, *(b)* headed paper and *(c)* compliment slips in each year since 1997. [214939]

Mr. Rammell: The cost of business cards, headed paper and compliment slips comes out of the general stationery budget and we do not have a breakdown for these individual items.

Northern Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what commitments he has given to decoupling the proposed EU aid and direct trade regulations for northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [R] [215098]

Mr. MacShane: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has made no commitment to decouple the proposed EU aid and direct trade regulations. The European Commission presented these regulations as a comprehensive package designed to put an end to the isolation of the Turkish Cypriot community and to facilitate the reunification of Cyprus. These measures would facilitate trade from the northern part of the island and strengthen its economic integration through financial assistance of €259 million. The UK supports efforts to obtain agreement on this package as soon as possible.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what opposition within the EU there is to the proposed regulation *(a)* for aid to and *(b)* on direct trade with northern Cyprus; and if he will make a statement. [R] [215178]

Mr. MacShane: Meetings within the EU are confidential in nature. It is therefore not possible to comment here on the position of individual member states regarding this issue. However, we very much regret that it was not possible for the EU Financial Aid and Direct Trade regulations for north Cyprus to be put forward for agreement at the November General Affairs and External Relations Council. The Government will support any efforts to obtain agreement on the package as soon as possible.

Special Advisers

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) on how many occasions between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 departmental special advisers travelled *(a)* domestically and *(b)* abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost; [202258]

(2) when he will reply to the question tabled by the hon. Member for Chichester on 1 December 2004, ref 202258. [210493]

Mr. Straw: I would like to apologise to the hon. Member for the delay in replying.

Between 31 March 2003 and 31 March 2004 special advisers in my Department travelled to the following places. The cost of each visit is included. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Michael Williams

Dates	*Places visited*	*Travel*	*Accommodation*	*Subsistence*	*Total (£)*
10 April 2003	Brussels	£405.00	Nil	£35.16	440.16
13–15 April 2003	Bahrain Kuwait Qatar Saudi Arabia	RAF	£109.25 Nil £70.48 Nil	44.90 Nil £52.39 Nil	277.02
4–6 May 2003	Athens	£1,091	£214	£149.11	1,454.11
29 June to 2 July 2003	Iran Afghanistan Kuwait Iraq	RAF/Charter	Nil Nil Nil Nil	Nil Nil £52.38 Nil	52.38
28–29 August 2003	Geneva	£427.80	Nil	£76.31	504.11
22–25 September 2003	New York	£3,793.40	£937.40	£157.94	4,888.74
9–12 November 2003	China	£2,428.82	£325.41	£260.42	3,014.65
27 November	Ditchley Park, Oxford	£48	Nil	Nil	48
20–21 January 2004	Davos	RAF	£126.57	£3.35	129.92
2–5 March 2004	Istanbul Pakistan	Charter	£113.00 Nil	£27.35 Nil	140.35
15–17 March 2004	Saudi Arabia UAE Oman	Charter	Nil £84.74 Nil	£33.00 £39.71 Nil	157.45

Ed Owen

Dates	*Places visited*	*Travel*	*Accommodation*	*Subsistence*	*Total (£)*
8–9 April 2003	Paris Madrid	Charter	Nil Nil	£17.52 Nil	17.52
13–14 May 2003	South Africa	£3,148.60	£78	£42.77	3,269.37
19 May 2003	Brussels	RAF	Nil	£17.84	17.84
19–21 June 2003	Greece	RAF	Nil	£85.11	85.11
29 August 2003	Italy	RAF	Nil	Nil	Nil
16 December 2003	Dublin	RAF	Nil	Nil	Nil
16 January 2004	Cheltenham, Gloucestershire	£84	Nil	Nil	84.00
22–23 March 2004	Brussels Copenhagen	RAF	Nil £88.84	£17.86 £53.43	160.13

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003 his special advisers travelled abroad in an official capacity; what places were visited; and how much each visit cost. [207188]

Mr. Straw: Between 31 March 2002 and 31 March 2003, special advisers in my Department travelled to the following places. The cost of each visit is included. All travel by special advisers is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Michael Williams

Dates	*Places visited*	*Travel*	*Accommodation*	*Subsistence*	*Total (£)*
18 April 2002	Geneva	RAF	Nil	£22.88	22.88
27–29 May 2002	Berlin Pakistan India	Charter	£66.30 £70.00	Nil £22.01 £14.87	173.18
13–21 July	China Japan Hong Kong India	£2,464.40	£329.43 £141.14 Nil Nil	£113.13 £95.02 Nil £20.36	3,163.48
10–16 Septem[illegible] 2002	New York	£2,448.30	£1,414.17	£335.91	4,198.38
7–10 October 2002	Paris Cairo Amman Kuwait Tehran	Charter	Nil Nil Nil Nil Nil	Nil £4.68 Nil £55.13 Nil	£59.81
5–6 November 2002	Belgrade Pristina Sarajevo	RAF	£95.41 Nil Nil	£29.04 Nil Nil	124.45
7–11 January 2003	Singapore Indonesia Malaysia	£4,844.70	£82.95 Nil Nil	£48.15 £46.18 Nil	5,021.98
15 March 2003	Belgrade	RAF	Nil	Nil	Nil

Ed Owen

Dates	*Places visited*	*Travel*	*Accommodation*	*Subsistence*	*Total (£)*
22–23 April 2002	Valencia	RAF	£98.55	£45.51	144.06
3 May 2002	Gibraltar	RAF	Nil	Nil	Nil
7–8 May 2002	Washington	£2,771.70	£147.42	£53.15	£2,972.27
27 May 2002	Berlin	Charter out Return £348.60	Nil Nil	Nil Nil	£348.60

Ed Owen

Dates	*Places visited*	*Travel*	*Accommodation*	*Subsistence*	*Total (£)*
29–30 August 2002	Helsingborg, Sweden	RAF out Return £371.44	£97.49	£45.00	513.93
14–15 October 2002	Washington and Chicago	£3,584.00	Nil	£74.37	3,658.37
2–4 December 2002	Bonn Berlin Ankara Slovenia	RAF	Nil Nil Nil Nil	Nil £11.38 £4.00 Nil	15.38
22–23 January 2003	Washington	£2,594.30	£110.24	£48.54	2,753.08

Sudan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will make a statement on the UN's decision not to find that the situation in Darfur is one of genocide; [213977]

(2) what progress is being made to implement Resolution 1564 on the investigation of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights in Darfur; and if he will make a statement. [213978]

Mr. Mullin: Resolution 1564 requested the establishment of an International Commission of Inquiry (ICI) to investigate reports of violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in Darfur. The report was presented to the Security Council on 31 January. It concludes that the Government of Sudan, the Arab militias and the rebels are all guilty of serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, which may amount to crimes against humanity and/or war crimes. The ICI has given the UNSG a list of suspects it believes may have perpetrated these crimes, and recommends that he pass this list to a competent prosecutor.

We called for the establishment of the ICI and welcome their report. We, and our fellow member states in the UN Security Council are united in our determination that there can be no impunity for these crimes and will be discussing the next steps over the coming days.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will intercede in the case of the threat to members of the Sudan Liberation Army in Nyala which could result in the use of the death penalty. [213979]

Mr. Mullin: We call on both the Government of Sudan and the rebels to abide by their commitments under the Abuja protocols, which include provision for the release of all persons detained in relation to the hostilities in Darfur, excluding those detained through due process of law.

Our embassy in Khartoum regularly raises abolition of the death penalty with the Government of Sudan. We also held detailed discussions on this subject during the joint Sudan/EU dialogue meetings in September 2004. We will continue to follow these cases closely.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what verification his Department has *(a)* sought and *(b)* received concerning the reports of the offensive use of helicopter gunships by the Sudanese Government mentioned in paragraph 5 of the recent report of the UN Secretary-General on Sudan; and if he will make a statement. [214791]

Mr. Mullin: We are concerned about the use of helicopter gunships in Darfur and continue to liaise closely with the African Union who are investigating the incidents. The latest report by the UN Secretary General, dated 4 February, notes that

> "helicopters and other aircraft previously used for bombing have continued to be utilised in support of operations up to the present month."

We have made clear that all sides must stop the fighting and abide by the commitments they have already made, particularly the Abuja Humanitarian and Security Protocols which commit the Government of Sudan to cease all hostile overflights.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* size and *(b)* nature of the Sudanese army deployment in December 2004 in El Fasher and Nyala; and if he will make a statement. [214792]

Mr. Mullin: The Government of Sudan mobilised troops around El Fasher and Nyala in December 2004, citing the need to prevent roads being blocked by the rebels. There are no definitive figures about the size of the Sudanese army deployment. The African Union reported renewed fighting between Government troops and rebel forces during this period.

We raised this matter with the Government of Sudan both bilaterally and during the Joint Implementation Mechanism (JIM) meeting on 20 December. The UK, and our partners in the JIM, called for an immediate cessation of all hostilities. At the JIM meeting the Government of Sudan agreed to cease this campaign in the region.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of claims of Sudanese air force activity around Thabit near El Fasher on 8 December 2004; and if he will make a statement. [214793]

Mr. Mullin: The African Union, UN, and non-governmental organisations reported claims of Sudanese air force activity around Thabit in Darfur around 8 December. The UN subsequently reported that the fighting around Thabit on 7 and 8 December resulted in four civilian fatalities and 20 injuries.

The Government of Sudan signed the Abuja Security Protocol on 9 November, committing themselves to refraining from all hostile military overflights over Darfur. We will continue to make clear to both the Government of Sudan and the rebels that they must abide fully by the N'Djamena ceasefire agreement and the Abuja Humanitarian and Security Protocols.

Zimbabwe

Ross Cranston: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the conclusions and recommendations contained in the report on the justice system in Zimbabwe published by the Bar Council of England and Wales. [214481]

Mr. Mullin: I agree with the report's assessment that the legal system in Zimbabwe is subject to cronyism, political interference and intimidation. We and our EU partners regularly raise our concerns with the Zimbabwean Government and its neighbours about the abuse of justice in Zimbabwe.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money her Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213708]

Mr. Caborn: All official travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules contained in the Department's staff handbook and all ministerial travel is undertaken fully in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code" and "Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

"Travel by Ministers" makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

In respect of domestic ministerial travel, the Department has not incurred any expenditure on chartering aircrafts in the last five years

Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government plan to amend the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act 1963 by statutory instrument to enable betting shops to open in the evenings between September and March. [215471]

Estelle Morris: We have no present plans to amend the 1963 Act as the hon. Member suggests.

However, should the Gambling Bill achieve royal assent we do envisage using the powers in clause 166 to set default conditions for betting premises licences which will include longer opening hours in the winter months than is currently allowed.

Burnley

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to the Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of her Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214700]

Mr. Caborn: The Department's aim is to improve the quality of life for everyone through cultural and sporting activities, to support the pursuit of excellence and to champion the tourism, creative and leisure industries. The Department's policies and actions have had a significant impact on Burnley since 2 May 1997.

In order to achieve our challenging targets for increased participation in sport and physical activity, we have invested in thousands of new and refurbished public sports facilities. From the £108 million investment in innovative sports facilities through the Active England programme, Burnley has benefited from an award of £1 million towards the cost of building a new joint health and leisure centre on the former St. Peter's car park site in Burnley town centre. Eight other sports facilities in Burnley have also benefited from Sport England Community Capital awards totalling over £2 million and Burnley football club has received a Football Youth Development award of £289,000 from Sport England. In 2002 we launched the first ever comprehensive national physical education, school sport and club links strategy with an investment of £459 million, benefiting schools throughout the country.

We have increased our national funding to the arts in real terms by 60 per cent. from £199 million in 1998–99 to £367 million in 2004–05. Between 1998–99 and 2003–04 Arts Council England, North West grants increased from £7.6 million to £19.6 million. In 2005–06 the total Arts Council England investment in the north-west will be £28.4 million. Burnley has benefited from grants to arts projects, organisations and individuals, including funding for Mid-Pennine Arts, the arts development agency for East Lancashire, which is based in Burnley, and the Burnley Youth Theatre, which develops young people's access to the theatre.

From September 2005, schools in Burnley will be included in the third phase of the Creative Partnerships programme, which began in 2002. Creative Partnerships aims to give school children and their teachers the opportunity to explore their creativity by working on sustained projects with creative organisations and individuals, including artists, theatre companies, dance studios, museums, orchestras, film-makers and historic buildings. Funding of £65 million was allocated for the period 2002–05 to develop Creative Partnerships, and the programme will receive at least a further £86 million in 2005–08.

Young people in Burnley also benefit from the Lancashire Youth Music Action Zone, which was launched in 2001 and has so far been awarded two grants totalling £280,000. In April 2005 it will be awarded a further grant of £110,000 from Youth Music. 6,000 young people have taken part in local music projects and events run by Lancashire Youth Music Action Zone.

Culture Online was launched in 2002 to increase access to, and participation in, arts and culture. Many of its projects are aimed at children of school age and at audiences that might not otherwise participate in arts and culture, including those who do not easily have access to arts and culture, people from deprived communities and people with particular educational or physical needs. People in Burnley will be among those who benefit from Culture Online. Between 2002 and 2004, £13 million was allocated to fund 20 Culture Online projects.

Through our commitment to public service broadcasting we have helped to foster an environment in which a creative, commercially successful broadcasting industry provides a wide range of UK-made, high quality original programmes catering for all viewers and listeners. We have ensured a secure funding base for the BBC and Channel 4, while giving them the freedom to develop commercial operations which complement and support their public service remit. The Communications Act 2003 includes provisions to ensure that public service broadcasting will continue to have a key role to play in the digital future.

Our support for, and promotion of, the film and broadcasting industries have contributed to the general success of film-making and television activity in the Burnley area. BBC Drama's adaptation of North and South was filmed at Queens Street Mill, Burnley, and a forthcoming drama about Casanova was filmed partly on location at Towneley Hall, Burnley. A new feature film is currently filming in Burnley.

In November 2000 we introduced free television licences for people aged 75 or over. Information on the number of beneficiaries by constituency is not available. However, according to Department for Work and Pensions records, the number of households in Burnley with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in 2003–04 was 5,000.

We have changed the licensing laws to allow people to hold and attend commercial dances on Sunday, to make it easier for restaurants to open an hour later, and to relax the alcohol licensing hours from 11 pm on New Year's Eve to 11 am on New Year's Day in all future years; and we have given the police greater powers to take action against under-age drinking and disorderly and noisy licensed premises. The Licensing Act 2003, when fully implemented, will introduce a streamlined, consistent and fair licensing regime for the provision of alcohol, public entertainment and late night refreshment. It will provide greater choice for consumers, bring regeneration and increased employment opportunities and protect local residents whose lives have been blighted by disturbance and antisocial behaviour.

The Gambling Bill will, when implemented, transfer responsibility for licensing gambling premises to local authorities. Local people and businesses will be able to make representations about applications for licenses and local authorities will be able to decide not to issue licenses for casino premises. These changes will give local communities, including those in Burnley, a greater say in the regulation of gambling in their area.

Tourism in Burnley has benefited from Government-funded marketing activity. In April 2003 we established VisitBritain with a new domestic marketing remit for England, and we gave strategic responsibility for tourism development to the Regional Development Agencies, including the North West Development Agency. These changes, together with VisitBritain's successful marketing activities in promoting Britain abroad as an attractive tourist destination, benefit all parts of the country, including Burnley.

English Heritage has awarded grants worth over £1.3 million to Burnley since 2 May 1997, including six grants totalling over £1 million for the Burnley and Padiham Conservation Area Partnership Scheme.

Burnley Library has 49 PCs connected to the internet through the People's Network which was funded through a £120 million Lottery grant and which has put all the United Kingdom's public libraries on-line. In addition, the Department is funding the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council with £5 million over three years to implement the Framework for the Future Action Plan and Library Improvement Programme, which is designed to encourage improvement across the public libraries sector in England.

The Department has been an energetic advocate of the community value of public libraries. Lancashire county council has recognised this value, for example by siting at Burnley Library the County's first of 15 SMILE centres for children and young people with learning difficulties, following a DCMS/Wolfson Foundation Reader Development Grant of £178,000 in 2001–02.

Information from the National Lottery distributors indicates that since 2 May 1997 Burnley has benefited from over 190 awards totalling over £8.7 million. Of these, 28 awards worth over £2.9 million were made by the New Opportunities Fund which was established by the Government in 1999. The New Opportunities Fund merged with the Community Fund in June 2004 to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Cleaning Costs

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the costs of cleaning the Department were in each year since 1997. [213775]

Mr. Caborn: The DCMS has four office premises; and the contract for cleaning is an outsourced contract. Costs since 1997–8 are as follows:

	£
1997–1998	96,563
1998–99	99,375
1999–2000	113,030
2000–2001	189,192
2001–02	216,343

	£
2002–003	211,691
2003–2004	221,187

[1] Change of premises during this period

As the scope of DCMS responsibilities has broadened and staff were recruited or transferred under machinery of government changes, more office space has been required. This has increased cleaning costs. Annual increases in cleaning contracts have been the norm and the above figures reflect cost per square metre cleaning costs in central London.

Correspondence

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the statement by the Minister of State for Sport on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 109, undertaking to write to the hon. Member for Bath about the storage of electronic information as proof of entry for ticketless lotteries, when he will write. [215587]

Mr. Caborn: I wrote to the hon. Member on 8 February, and have arranged for a copy of the letter to be placed in Libraries of both Houses.

Design

Alan Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who the ministerial design champion for her Department is. [215643]

Mr. Caborn: The Ministerial Design Champion for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport is the right hon. Lord McIntosh of Haringey, Minister for Media and Heritage.

Digital Switchover

Syd Rapson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to ensure that there is adequate information for the public in advance of digital switchover on purchasing television receivers which will be operable after digital switchover. [214493]

Estelle Morris: The responsibility for ensuring that everyone gets all the information they need about the digital switchover process, including information on what equipment will work after switchover, will primarily be one for Switchco, broadcasters and the supply chain. The Government will continue to take responsibility for communicating its switchover policy.

Free Television Licences

Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Hartlepool are in receipt of free television licences. [215127]

Estelle Morris: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Hartlepool constituency in 2003–04 was 4,900, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Government Art Collection

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the items of art purchased by the Government Art Collection since 1997; and what the cost of each item was. [215111]

Estelle Morris: The works of art purchased by the Government Art Collection (GAC) since 2 May 1997 are listed in a separate document. I am arranging for copies of the document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

The information about prices paid is commercially sensitive. It is not the GAC's practice to publish the prices paid for individual works of art purchased directly from the artist, individual or from a dealer as information of this nature might prejudice the commercial interests both of the GAC in its purchasing activities generally and of the relevant artist, individual or dealer. This practice is consistent with the practice of the national collections.

However, the prices paid for works of art acquired at auction are published by the auction houses, and in these cases are listed in the document referred to above.

The Government Art Collection is part of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; its acquisition policy is guided by the Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection which is a non-departmental public body. Members are both independent and ex-officio, including the directors of the National Galleries.

Licensing Hours

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her latest estimate is of how many applications for extending licensing hours will be made in each police authority area in England and Wales. [214043]

Mr. Caborn: We estimate that up to 65 per cent. of applications to convert existing licences would also simultaneously apply to make variations, which would include extending licensing hours. Estimates are for England and Wales as a whole and are not made for each police authority area. A recent British Beer and Pub Association survey indicated that none of the 30,500 public houses and bars in England and Wales owned by its members expected to apply to open for 24 hours. The survey indicated the majority of pubs will stay open for no longer than at present during the week, and most will only look for an extra hour or two at the weekend.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of staff mobile phone bills was in each year since 1997. [214899]

Mr. Caborn: The cost to my Department of mobile phones supplied to Ministers and officials was £25,000 in 2000–01, £21,000 in 2001–02, £29,000 in 2002–03 and £36,000 in 2003–04. It is not possible to provide figures prior to 2000 save at disproportionate cost.

Museums

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many foreign nationals have visited museums in England in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [214023]

Estelle Morris: Figures for the number of foreign nationals who visit all museums in England each year are not available. The number of visits from overseas residents to museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, which include the national museums and galleries in England, is set out in the following table. They represented just under a third of all visits to DCMS-sponsored museums in 2003–04.

Overseas visitors to DCMS—sponsored museums and galleries

	Number
1997–98	n/a
1998–99	10,429,096
1999–2000	10,508,406
2000–01	9,968,020
2001–02	10,113,088
2002–03	10,679,000
2003–04	11,709,431

Museums and Galleries

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department has taken to measure the *(a)* socio-economic background, *(b)* area of origin, *(c)* ethnicity, *(d)* disability and *(e)* gender of visitors to (i) museums and galleries sponsored by her Department and (ii) other museums and galleries; and if she will make a statement. [215563]

Estelle Morris: In 1999, DCMS published in a review of efficiency and effectiveness of national museums and galleries a set of potential performance indicators. Working with the National Museums Directors Conference, these performance indicators have been refined to a set of key indicators. The measures include the number of visits by C2DEs to a sponsored museum, the ethnicity of the visitors, and whether visitors are from the UK or overseas. They do not include either the gender of visitors or whether they are disabled, but do separately identify, educational visits, children under 16 and people over 60.

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, which is sponsored by DCMS, has put in place similar measures to monitor visits to the regional hub museums. Participation by teachers and by individual adult and community groups is also measured, as are educational visits.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total cost to public funds of free admission to museums and galleries sponsored by her Department was in each year from 1999–2000 to 2003–04; what the estimated cost will be in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [215564]

Estelle Morris: The additional grant in aid paid in compensation to DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries which formerly charged for admission or which opened free in the period 1999–2000 to 2003–04, is shown in the following table. From 2004–05 onwards, a separate amount is not paid, but funding for free admission is taken into account in the allocation of all funds to all DCMS-sponsored museums.

Level of compensation given to those museums which formally charged for admission, or which opened free in the period 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	£ million
1999–2000	4.2
2000–01	13
2001–02	20
2002–03	34
2003–04	35

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many visitors to national museums and galleries sponsored by her Department were *(a)* from the United Kingdom and *(b)* visiting the United Kingdom from overseas in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [215565]

Estelle Morris: The number of visits from *(a)* UK residents and *(b)* overseas residents to museums and galleries sponsored by DCMS, which include the national museums and galleries in England, is set out in the table.

	Visits by UK residents	*Visits by overseas residents*
1997–98	[1]n/a	[1]n/a
1998–99	13,530,904	10,429,096
1999–2000	13,871,594	10,508,406
2000–01	19,013,790	9,968,020
2001–02	20,101,669	10,113,088
2002–03	22,889,420	10,679,000
2003–04	23,456,040	11,709,431

[1] Total visits were 23.500,000

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of the change in revenue from *(a)* ticket sales for special exhibitions, *(b)* catering facilities, *(c)* merchandise and *(d)* other sources of museums and galleries sponsored by her Department as a result of offering free admission from the end of 2001; and if she will make a statement. [215567]

Estelle Morris: A study of income generated by the DCMS-sponsored museums and galleries was published by the National Audit Office in January 2004. This showed that in the 2002–03, the year following the introduction of free admission, DCMS sponsored museums' income from trading increased by £0.7 million from £20.8 million to £21.5 million. Income from admissions fell from £24 million to £17.7 million. The net reduction in income from these two sources was £5.6 million. A total of £68.3 million was raised from other sources in 2002–03, taking the total self generated income to around £108 million.

PE Teaching

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Department of Education and Skills regarding the quality of physical education teaching in schools. [214834]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills share an ambitious PSA target connected to the national PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy. The two Departments are working closely on this joint project, on an on-going basis.

As part of the project, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) has been working with schools to help improve the quality of PE and school sport. This includes taking into account of how young people learn best, and how to improve their progress and attainment. A guide entitled "Do You Have High Quality PE and Sport in Your School?" has recently been produced by the QCA. This is designed to help schools to self-evaluate the quality of their PE and sport, and help them improve the quality of their provision and make it more effective.

Another strand of the PESSCL project covers professional development and £18 million has been committed over 2003–06 to deliver this programme. Schools can draw, free of charge, from a menu of resources to help teachers provide high quality PE and school sport. Schools in 116 LEAs are already accessing the programme.

Postage

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent on postage by the Department in each year since 1997. [215025]

Mr. Caborn: The annual cost of postage is as follows:

	£
1997–98	69,527
1998–99	70,018
1999–2000	66,685
2000–01	67,898
2001–02	74,168
2002–03	42,637
2003–04	62,786

Publicity

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total expenditure by her Department on *(a)* advertising and *(b)* advertising and publicity was in (i) 1996–97, (ii) 1997–98 and (iii) 2003–04; and what the estimate of cost of each will be in (A) 2004–05, (B) 2005–06, (C) 2006–07 and (D) 2007–08. [211676]

Mr. Caborn: The information is as follows:

(a) The Department incurred zero expenditure on advertising in 1996–97, 1997–98 and 2003–04. No expenditure on advertising will be incurred in 2004–05 and no expenditure is expected to be incurred in 2005–06, 2006–07 or 2007–08.

(b) The Department incurred the following expenditure on publicity (including publications, marketing literature and events):

	£
1996–97	75,562
1997–98	252,766
2003–04	533,549

The estimated expenditure on publicity in this, and the next three, financial years is as follows:

	£
2004–05	674,000
2005–06	[1]—
2006–07	[1]—
2007–08	[1]—

[1] Not yet decided

Sports Funding

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much money from the New Opportunities Fund has been spent on *(a)* school and *(b)* community sport since 2000. [214836]

Mr. Caborn: The New Opportunities Fund (now operating with the Community Fund as the Big Lottery Fund) has made available £738 million for school and community sport in England since 2000.

£581 million has been made available for New Opportunities for PE and Sport (NOPES) providing community facilities in schools. Of this, £25 million has been devolved to the Space for Sport and the Arts programme and £30 million set aside for football projects, distributed via the Football Foundation.

In 2002, £19.8 million was made available to the Out of School Hours School Sport Co-ordinators programme to resource activities that promote effective links between sport and learning. An additional £28.4 million was made available in 2004.

The Big Lottery Fund contributed £77.5 million to the Active England programme through which new and modernised sports facilities and physical activity interventions are being developed.

Playing Fields and Community Green Spaces, the largest of the Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities schemes, was granted £31.5 million of funding. The scheme has two main elements: playing fields and playing pitch strategies, which has been granted £22.3 million, and playgrounds and community play areas, which has been granted £9.2 million.

Staff Identity Passes

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost of producing a staff identity pass was in the Department on the latest date for which figures are available; and how many staff identity passes have been reported lost or stolen in each year since 1997. [215091]

Mr. Caborn: The cost of producing a staff identity pass in the Department for Culture Media and Sport is £12 per person. In 2004, 50 passes were reported lost or stolen and they were deactivated immediately. Records of lost or stolen staff identity passes were not kept prior to 2004.

Staff Training

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the costs of departmental *(a)* staff training days and *(b)* staff development days held away from the department were in each year since 1997. [213790]

Mr. Caborn: The Department offers a range of learning and development opportunities both internally within the Department and externally through other providers. All decisions about learning and development activities are focused on cost-efficiency, rather than location.

Since 1997 the total annual cost to the Department of all learning and development provision was as follows:

	£
1997–1998	200,620
1998–1999	311,514
1999–2000	348,693
2000–01	309,833
2001–02	318,352
2002–03	482,573
2003–04	453,709
2004–05	305,180

[1] To end of September 2004

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much the Department spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213848]

Mr. Caborn: Stationery and office equipment are accounted for jointly.

The costs in the relevant years were as follows:

	£
1997–1998	155,743
1998–1999	109,798
1999–2000	170,640
2000–2001	103,413
2001–2002	110,404
2002–2003	132,339
2003–2004	172,795

Commencing April 2004 stationery budgets were delegated to individual units, rather than centrally funded, to increase awareness of costs.

Television Licences (Fines)

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many people have been fined in each of the last three years for not possessing a television licence while using a television set. [213381]

Estelle Morris: The available information relates to all offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts, the great majority of which, however, relate to television licence fee evasion. The number of people in England, Scotland and Wales[1] fined for offences under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts[2] in each of the last three years for which information is available was:

[1] Figures for Northern Ireland are not available.

[2] On the principal offence basis

	Number
2000	105,203
2001	83,200
2002	95,757

TV Licences

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many students who live in shared accommodation paid the television licence fee in the 2003–04 financial year. [213992]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: The information requested is not available. The BBC have indicated that the records held by TV Licensing do not include comprehensive data on licences purchased by students, nor do they distinguish between addresses in single and those in multiple occupation.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many undergraduate students in the UK paid the television licence fee in the 2003–04 financial year and how much revenue was raised thereby. [213993]

Estelle Morris *[holding answer 4 February 2005]*: The information requested is not available. The BBC have indicated that the records held by TV Licensing do not include comprehensive data on licences purchased by students, nor do they distinguish between graduates and undergraduates.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on tackling anti-social behaviour in Lancashire. [215326]

Ms Blears: The Government's TOGETHER campaign helps local people and agencies to tackle and not tolerate antisocial behaviour. TOGETHER applies across all England and Wales including the hon. Members constituency.

Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs) across Lancashire have employed antisocial behaviour co-ordinators and solicitors to improve the response to antisocial behaviour. CDRPS have also undertaken environmental clean ups and are delivering diversionary activities such as youth shelters and teen meets.

Lancashire has been at the forefront in the use of antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) and ABCs. Lancashire was among the first areas in the country to obtain interim ASBOs. 114 ASBOs have been issued in Lancashire since April 1999.

As part of TOGETHER, with our partner Groundwork UK, we have introduced Operation Gate It—a specific fund for environmental solutions to problems of antisocial behaviour. In 2003, we funded pilot Gate-It schemes in Blackburn, Bury, Bootle and Ormskirk. In June 2004, we announced further Gate It Schemes in Blackpool and Wigan. This year's award winners will be announced in shortly.

Blackburn has been chosen as a TOGETHER action area, which will pilot new approaches and become an example of best practice in tackling antisocial behaviour. Blackburn will also look to develop new ways of involving members of the public in the drive to tackle antisocial behaviour.

Demoted Tenancies

Mr. Byrne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many tenancies have been downgraded under the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 in *(a)* Birmingham, *(b)* Bristol, *(c)* Leeds, *(d)* Liverpool, *(e)* Manchester, *(f)* Newcastle, *(g)* Nottingham and *(h)* Sheffield. [214039]

Keith Hill: I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not currently request that local authorities supply information on numbers of demoted tenancies. We are working to ensure that this information is supplied from 2005–06 onwards.

The Housing Corporation are collecting this information from registered social landlords as part of the Regulatory and Statistical Returns for 2005–06. This data is expected to be published in August 06.

Anti-terrorism Measures

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what information the Government have published for *(a)* the general public and *(b)* small businesses on terrorist alertness and prevention. [215350]

Mr. Charles Clarke: For the public the Government have published information on how they can protect themselves and their families; what to do in an emergency; how they can help prevent terrorism by being alert and reporting anything suspicious to the Police Anti-Terrorism Hotline (0800 789 321). This information can be found in the Preparing for Emergencies booklet and on the website www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk and information on threat and what the Government are doing to combat terrorism can be found on the Home Office website www.homeoffice.gov.uk/terrorism.

Government advice to businesses on prevention and being alert to terrorism applies to businesses generally. The information we have published includes information on protective security from basic practical steps to technological solutions such as CCTV and protecting IT networks; information on what to do with suspicious packages; and how businesses can plan to make sure they can recover from the consequences of emergencies, whatever the cause. This information can be found on the Security Service website www.mi5.gov.uk and a range of publications to aid businesses in continuity planning are available on www.UKResilience.gov.uk.

Asylum and Immigration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total Government spending on asylum and immigration was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04; what the planned expenditure is for each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211479]

Mr. Browne: This information is not available in the format requested but Immigration and Nationality Directorate expenditure and asylum support costs for the years 1997–98 to 2003–04 are set out in the table as follows. Asylum support costs were borne by other government departments up to and including 1999–2000.

£ million

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*[1]2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Resource							
Asylum Support non IND	375	475	52	—	—	—	—
Asylum Support IND only	—	—	537	747	1046	1070	1008
Other IND expenditure	207	214	268	551	578	793	887
Total IND expenditure	582	689	857	1318	1624	1863	1895

£ million

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*[1]2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Capital							
IND expenditure	—	—	—	65	142	75	101

[1] Because of a change in the basis of government accounting in 2000–01, from cash to resource (accruals), it is not possible to compare directly figures from 1999–2000 to 2000–01 onwards.

IND allocations for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are as follows:

£ million

	2004–05	2005–06
Resource	1,656	1,519
Capital	130	111

Budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08 have not yet been finalised.

These figures exclude allocations to the Department for Constitutional Affairs from the single asylum budget.

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what means were used to inform *(a)* the public and *(b)* interested bodies of the 31 December deadline for applications for special consideration by pre-2000 applicants for asylum. [210738]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to right hon. and hon. Members on 19 August. Home Office officials wrote to the main non-governmental organisations working with or on behalf of asylum seekers. The correspondence drew attention to the 31 December closing date for receipt of applications under the Families ILR exercise. As a result we have received large numbers of applications.

Mr. Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Zimbabwean asylum seekers have had their applications declined and been repatriated in each month since January 2002. [210777]

Mr. Browne: We have taken repatriation here to mean removal. The number of Zimbabwean nationals who had claimed asylum at some stage and have been removed from the United Kingdom between January 2002 and September 2004 is given in the table. This information includes persons who departed under assisted voluntary return schemes run by the International Organization for Migration and those who departed voluntarily after enforcement action had been initiated.

It is not possible to say at what stage in the asylum process people are at the time of their removal.

National Statistics on the number and nationality of asylum applicants removed from the UK during the final quarter of 2004 will be published on the Home Office website, www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html, on 22 February 2005.

Removals and voluntary departures[1] of asylum applicants, excluding dependants, 2002 to 2004, by month, nationals of Zimbabwe[2,3,4]

Number of principal applicants

Month	*2002[5]*	*2003[5, 6]*	*2004[6]*
January	15	*	5
February	5	5	5
March	5	10	5
April	15	5	5
May	5	5	5
June	10	5	5
July	10	5	10
August	15	5	10
September	5	5	10
October	10	10	[7]—
November	10	5	[7]—
December	10	5	[7]—
Total	110	70	55

[1] Includes persons departing "voluntarily" after enforcement action had been initiated against them, persons leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration, and removals on safe third country grounds.

[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five and may not sum due to rounding.

[3] Figures may include a small number of dependants leaving under Assisted Voluntary Return Programmes.

[4] Figures exclude dependants of asylum seekers removed. Data on dependants removed have only been collected since April 2001.

[5] Data have been estimated due to data quality issues.

[6] Provisional figures.

[7] Data for October to December 2004 will be published in February 2005.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make it his policy to ensure that asylum seekers can undertake voluntary work. [213857]

Mr. Browne: Asylum seekers are permitted to undertake unpaid voluntary work and the Government would encourage them to do so wherever possible. It supports a number of relevant schemes from its Purposeful Activities for Asylum Seekers Fund.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision has been made to provide asylum seekers, including end of process asylum seekers, from those countries affected by the tsunami *(a)* with temporary, humanitarian or discretionary protection in the UK and *(b)* permission to work until they can reasonably go home. [214986]

Mr. Browne: The suspension of enforced returns to areas directly affected by the tsunami is temporary and we have no plans to grant leave or permission to work to failed asylum seekers from those areas. Individuals from the directly affected areas will normally be eligible for section 4 (hard case) support while the temporary pension remains in place. Asylum applications made by individuals from areas affected by the tsunami will be considered in accordance with normal policy and procedures.

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum-seekers are located in the Easington constituency. [215517]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives.

At the end of September 2004 there were no asylum seekers in the Easington constituency recorded as in receipt of National Asylum Support Service (NASS) support.

Corresponding figures for those not in receipt of NASS support are not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Numbers of asylum seekers placed in NASS accommodation and numbers who are in receipt of subsistence only support from NASS, are published on a quarterly and annual basis. The next publication covering the fourth quarter of 2004 (October to December) will be available on 22 February 2005 on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Mr. John Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with the application for indefinite leave to remain lodged in April 2004 by Mr. Hameed Al Haddad of Solihull (Home Office ref. H1021433). [209874]

Mr. Browne *[holding answer 20 January 2005]:* Following Mr. Hameed Al Haddad's application dated 2 April 2004 a decision has been taken to grant Mr. Hameed Al Haddad indefinite leave to remain. A letter informing Mr. Hameed Al Haddad of this decision was sent to his representatives, Harbans Singh & Co. by recorded delivery on 18 January 2005. The recorded delivery number is DT280841458GB.

Black Offenders

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to commission research into the reasons for increases in the number of black offenders in custody. [205688]

Paul Goggins: The prison population by ethnic group, for each year from 1993 to 2003, has been published in table 8.4 of the Home Office Statistical Bulletin "Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2003". A copy of this publication is available in the House of Commons library.

One of the reasons for the increase in the black prison population is the increase in the number of foreign nationals in prison. The population of black foreign national prisoners increased by 284 per cent. between 1993 and 2003.

There are no plans to conduct specific research into the reasons for increases in the number of black offenders in custody. However, the forthcoming cohort study will include a sample of ethnic minority prisoners in comparison with other prisoners.

Chief Constable of Lancashire

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* process and *(b)* timetable for replacing the chief constable of Lancashire. [215463]

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects Paul Stephenson to take up his position as Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police; and what the timetable is for the appointment of his successor as chief constable of Lancashire. [215003]

Ms Blears: Mr. Stephenson will take up his new appointment as Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police on 16 March 2005. Lancashire police authority advertised their chief constable post on 4 February. It will be considered by the senior appointments panel on 16 March, and the authority will conduct interviews on 18 and 19 April.

Correspondence

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Asylum and Immigration will reply to the letter of 15 November 2004 from the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan regarding his constituent Mr. G. Pesic. [212169]

Mr. Mullin: I have been asked to reply.

UKvisas, the department responsible for entry clearance matters arising overseas, replied to the hon. Member on 1 February.

Mr. Wilshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Spelthorne dated 29 September 2004 about Mr. Ayoub Soobhanu (Ref: Ruhomaun R299459). [214936]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to the hon. Member on 10 February 2005.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply in full to the letter from the hon. Member for Totnes about Mr. Henry Arthur dated 17 November 2004, acknowledged by his Department on 26 November 2004 (ref: M18669/4). [215537]

Mr. Browne: I wrote to the hon. Member on 10 February.

Deportation Orders

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what criteria are used to determine deportation applications for British prison inmates who are Irish nationals; and whether this differs from the criteria used for other EU nationals. [214696]

Mr. Browne: European law (Council Directive 64/221 EEC) provides that nationals of member states may be expelled from the territory of another member state only on grounds of public policy, public security or public health. These provisions are reflected in the EEA Regulations 2000. A decision must then be taken as to whether deportation is justified.

However, under section 7 of the Immigration Act 1971 (as amended), nationals of the Republic of Ireland are not liable to deportation if they were ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom at the coming into force of the 1971 Act and who, at the time of the Secretary of State's decision, had been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom for the last five years. This excludes any time during which the person claiming exemption was serving a custodial sentence of more than six months.

Dispersal Orders

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many dispersal orders have been used by Devon and Cornwall constabulary since their inception. [213980]

Ms Blears: Devon and Cornwall Constabulary tell me that, between January and August 2004, they authorised five areas under section 30 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. In these areas 155 people were dispersed and one young person under the age of 16 was taken home.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee on the introduction of a uniform format for visas met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if he will make a statement. [214776]

Mr. Browne: The EU uniform format visa (UFV) has been in operation since 1995.

Issues surrounding the UFV, and any amendments to the legislation governing it, are discussed in the EU Visa Working Party/Mixed Committee. In addition, the European Commission Article 6 comitology committee meets to discuss technical specifications for the uniform format of visa, and in particular those elements designed to prevent counterfeiting or falsification. Both Committees meet in EU buildings in Brussels.

The Visa Working Party met five times during the Italian presidency, six times during the Irish Presidency and six times during the Dutch presidency. The Article 6 committee met on five occasions during the same period.

The Visa Working Party and Article 6 Committee discuss a range of issues, not just the uniform format visa. But issues relating to the uniform format visa have arisen at all meetings of the Visa Working Party during the three Presidencies. The specific UK government expert present at any meeting will vary depending on which items are on the agenda.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by *(a)* police and *(b)* non-police personnel in each Lancashire district in each year since 2000. [215462]

Ms Blears: Available information on motoring fixed penalty notices issued by the Lancashire police force area can be found in the annual Home Office publication "Offences relating to motor vehicles, England and Wales Supplementary tables"—Table 20*(a)* refers. The information is collected at police force level only. The latest issue covers 2002. Copies are available from the Library. As at 31 December 2002 no borough council within Lancashire were enforcing parking controls.

4,868 penalty notices for disorder were issued in Lancashire in 2004, the year of their introduction. Figures collected centrally do not allow analysis below police force area level nor distinguish between those issued by police and non-police personnel.

Gurkha Soldiers

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Gurkha soldiers living in the UK are not entitled to UK citizenship because their service ended prior to 1 July 1997; and what percentage of the total number of Gurkha soldiers living in the UK they represent. [215357]

Mr. Browne: Before applying for citizenship a Gurkha needs to have been granted settlement in the UK. It is not possible to provide the information requested because this would require examination of individual case files which could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who drew up the guest list for the Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration in Westminster Hall on 27 January; and which hon. and right hon. Members were invited. [212227]

Fiona Mactaggart: The list was drawn up by the Home Office in consultation with survivor and veteran groups and stakeholder bodies with an interest in Holocaust commemoration and education.

The following hon. Members were invited:

The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party

Six members of the Government with departmental responsibilities relevant to HMD—the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the Secretary of State for Education, and myself as the Home Office Minister with responsibility for Race Equality, Community Policy and Civil Renewal. In the event, the Foreign Secretary attended the commemoration at Auschwitz on the same day and was therefore unable to be present. The Secretaries of State for Defence and Education were represented by Mr. Adam Ingram and Mr. Ivan Lewis.

The Speaker and the Leader of the House.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, and Mr. Rhodri Morgan and Mr. Jack McConnell representing respectively the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Executive

Mr. Lembit Opik, Mr. James Clappison and Mr. Andrew Lansley, as nominees of the Holocaust Education Trust. Ms. Louise Ellman as a member-designate of the new Holocaust Memorial Day Trust.

House Arrest

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from the First Minister of the Scottish Executive about the compatibility of the proposals for detaining suspects under house arrest with the Scotland Act 1998. [215481]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have received no such representations from my right hon. Friend. Nor would I expect to, since the proposals I announced on 26 January in relation to control orders relate to national security which is not a matter within the devolved responsibilities of the Scottish Parliament. However, our respective officials are in close contact regarding development of policy and on the practical implications of the proposals in Scotland.

Identity Cards

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will place in the Library a copy of the study conducted by Consult Hyperion Ltd. commissioned by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate into the creation of a Biometrics Governance Framework. [214934]

Mr. Browne: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) commissioned a study by Amtec Consulting Group in 2003 into Biometrics Co-ordination within IND in which a consultant from Consult Hyperion was involved. This report has been superseded by a study currently underway within IND into Biometrics Strategy with the same consultant from Consult Hyperion as part of the study team.

This report is currently at review stage and is unpublished. When this study is published, a copy will be placed into the Library.

Initiatives (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what budget has been allocated to the Home Office Communications Directorate in each of the last two years; and how many staff have been employed by the Directorate in each year. [201892]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office Communications Directorate—comprising the Press Office, the Information Services Unit, the Direct Communications Unit, the Internal Communications Unit and the Marketing and Strategic Unit—spent £33.127 million (sum of Resource and Capital) in the financial year 2003–04 and employed 228 staff. The budget for 2004–05 is £36.195 million and 254 staff are employed.

Magic Mushrooms

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much revenue was raised from VAT on the sale of magic mushrooms in each of the last five years. [215035]

Mr. Timms: HM Customs and Excise do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services.

Ministerial Residence

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost to public funds of the security works at his London home is; and what proportion of the total cost this represents. [209869]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office does not comment on the specific security arrangements of individuals.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the individual departments and units that *(a)* are already established and *(b)* are planned to be established within the National Offender Management Service. [201055]

Paul Goggins: Current Directorates within the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) are: the Chief Executive's Office, Policy, Finance, Health, Standards and Innovation, Information and Technology and that of the National Offender Manager.

As part of the NOMS change agenda, the new NOMS headquarters, alongside the Prison Service and Probation Service headquarters, is being redesigned. A proposal, including the allocation of individual units to Directorates, has been put forward to staff and trade unions for their comments. The new headquarters is being planned for April 2005 and I will write to the hon. Member once the design of the new headquarters has been agreed.

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the employer of offender managers will be under the National Offender Management Service. [209866]

Paul Goggins: As announced on 20 July 2004, offender managers will remain employed by Probation Boards. As the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) develops, the role of Boards and the management relations between Regional Offender managers (ROMs) and offender managers will change. Detailed feasibility work and consultation will be undertaken before final decisions are made.

Neighbourhood Watch

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on Neighbourhood Watch in Lancashire. [215466]

Ms Blears: The Lancashire Neighbourhood Watch Association (LNWA) is an active organisation which has a good working relationship with Lancashire constabulary. It has 2,700 registered neighbourhood watch schemes.

LNWA has successfully re-constructed its county committee and now has four of the six Lancashire police divisions represented at county level with a strong possibility that the remaining two will join up in the near future.

In addition, LNWA have reached an agreement with Lancashire constabulary and Lancashire Trading Standards to provide a website which aims to fast-track information from the police and trading standards to neighbourhood watch co-ordinators. This will help prevent crimes such as distraction burglary.

A new Lancashire county newsletter is about to be published and LNWA are working closely with the British Transport police to promote their Railway Watch scheme which aims to reduce criminal activity at railway stations in the region.

The Home Secretary and I are very appreciative of the efforts of the LNWA including its successful partnership working with the police and others.

Passports

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 276W, on identity cards and passports, what the reasons are for the fall in the projected numbers of passport applications between 2005 and 2009. [214909]

Mr. Browne: The answer of 25 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 276W gave projected volumes of passport demand between 2005 and 2014. During this period we anticipate fluctuating demand for both adult new applications and adult renewals. The pattern is different for each demand type and is based on the constraints detailed as follows.

The forecast decline in adult new passport applications is due to the following:

> Since 1999, the majority of applications for new passports have been from children, as opposed to adults due to the policy introduced in 1998 that children require their own passports and should no longer be included on parents' passports.
>
> When a child passport holder turns 16 and applies to renew their passport, the application is treated as an adult renewal (since we already have a record of them on our database and have carried out previous identity checks). The absence of children turning 16 as a major source of adult new applications has resulted in the approach of saturation of new passport uptake within the adult population.
>
> Adult new passport intake has fallen from a peak of 2.2 million applications in 1996 to approximately 820,000 in 2000–01. It has gradually declined since to only 660,000 applications in 2004. The UKPS estimates that this gradual decline will persist to approximately 540,000 applications by 2009.
>
> Once saturation has been achieved, the actual new adult passport demand will be susceptible to variations in the number of immigrants who take up British nationality (as a consequence of Government policy) and the number of children that have not held a passport by the age of 16.

Adult passport renewal volumes are forecast to reflect fluctuations in the volumes of passports that are available to be renewed during the period. Passports that are available to renew include:

> Adult passports issued 10 years previously; and
>
> Child passports issued five years previously to 11 to 15-year-old children.

The peak in renewals around 2006 is partly driven by the fact that this is the tenth anniversary of the year when the one year "British Visitors' Passport" was abolished and the fifth anniversary of the initial bulge in children passport issues, following the above mentioned policy change.

Dr. Tonge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many passports have been lost by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate while processing international student applications for leave to remain over the past five years. [214049]

Mr. Browne: Statistics on the number of letters issued for passports reported lost or mislaid by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) while processing international student applications for LTR over the last five years would be available only at disproportionate cost.

General Group in IND deals with applications for leave to remain, including those from students. Internal management information for General Group shows there were 53 letters issued for passports reported lost or mislaid from April 2001 to March 2002; 335 issued from April 2002 to March 2003; 469 issued from April 2003 to March 2004; and 207 issued from April 2004 to November 2004. This should be balanced against the number of decisions made in the same period which were 380,000 (0.01 per cent); 403,000 (0.08 per cent); 534,000 (0.08 per cent); and 271,544(0.07 per cent) respectively.

Prisons

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures *(a)* are in place and *(b)* he plans to introduce to ensure that people and bodies in the arts field can work together to increase the range, quantity and quality of activities for prisoners. [213359]

Paul Goggins: Arts can make a significant contribution to the effective and humane operation of the prison regime. Financial support to arts activities for offenders are provided centrally to several national arts organisations. It is recognised that the arts can act as a gateway into education for prisoners who have not been engaged with formal learning. Most prisons now have a head of learning and skills, a post funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and the heads determine the part that arts activities can play within the establishment.

At a prison arts conference last year a guide on provision of voluntary sector activities in prisons was launched for heads of learning and skills and managers in the voluntary sectors.

The unit produces a regular e-mail newsletter for arts organisations working with offenders, hosts a Forum for Arts and Offenders, and provides training to artists wanting to work with prisoners. The Unit for Arts and Offenders will be members of the newly formed NOMS Voluntary and Community Sector Advisory Group. Activities being undertaken by arts organisations in prisons and the community are documented in the Directory of Arts Activities in Prisons, which has been produced annually by the Unit for Arts and Offenders with financial support from DfES.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Prison Service establishes and maintains links between prisons and local employers. [213358]

Paul Goggins: The National Offender Management Service is developing a joint prison probation strategy for establishing and maintaining links with employers. These links are focused on sectors that have significant labour shortages nationally and regionally, such as: construction; catering; industrial cleaning; utilities; sports and fitness; driving, and distribution. Opportunities are also being explored in horticulture and information communication technology. These sectors were identified following consultation with the Confederation of British Industry, Jobcentre Plus and Sector Skills Councils.

The Prison Service is taking the lead on a cross-Government work programme for engaging with employers which has been agreed by the Employment, Training and Education Sub-Board of the Reducing Re-offending Programme Board. This work programme includes contributions from NOMS, the Probation Service, Jobcentre Plus, DfES and the Learning and Skills Council. Its aim is to build on existing work to encourage employers to contribute to the training of offenders and to commit to the recruitment of those who achieve an agreed level of skills.

At a local level, employer links are being developed and maintained by the Heads of Learning and Skills and Resettlement Managers in establishments. They work closely with Jobcentre Plus, Learning and Skills Councils and voluntary organisations to involve employers in work and training programmes for prisoners, and to encourage them to recruit prisoners upon their release.

The Prison Service is currently developing an employer database, holding information on those who are willing and able to offer work to ex-offenders. This will enable prisons to access information about opportunities in their local area, and on a national basis to assist prisoners who are held at establishments outside their home areas.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on how how many occasions departmental Ministers have used the Queen's Flight in each of the past five years. [213441]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/private charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

In respect of domestic ministerial travel, information is not held centrally and could be answered only at disproportionate cost.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Research and Development

Mrs. Anne Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much and what percentage of the Department's expenditure went on research and development in each year between 2001–02 and 2003–04. [206984]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information relating to the amount and percentage of research and development costs of total planned expenditure for the Core Home Office is shown in the table.

	R and D spend (£ million)	*Percentage of total expenditure*
2001–02	[1]40.2	0.39
2002–03	[2]50.3	0.47
2003–04	[3]48	0.39

[1] As published in the Police Science and Technology Strategy 2003–2008 January 2003.

[2] As published in the Police Science and Technology Strategy 2004–2009. May 2004.

[3] As published by HM Treasury in "Science and Innovation: working towards a ten-year investment framework". March 2004.

River Police

Mr. Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he has taken to ensure an integrated policing approach across the boundaries of different police forces responsible for sections of the River Thames. [206819]

Ms Blears: Policing of the River Thames is an operational matter for the forces concerned. However, the need for greater and more effective collaboration across force boundaries is an issue highlighted by the recent police reform White Paper "Building Communities, Beating Crime". Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary have been commissioned to examine this issue as part of a wider study into whether the current 43 force structure in England and Wales is the right one to meet today's and tomorrow's policing needs.

Secure Juvenile Units

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many secure unit places for juvenile offenders there are in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [214366]

Paul Goggins: Local authorities contract with the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales to provide 235 secure places in local authority secure children's homes across England and Wales.

Visa Extensions (Students)

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to achieve a reduction in the costs of processing a visa extension for an international student. [214567]

Mr. Browne: International students bring significant economic and social benefits to the UK. In recognition of this, students seeking to vary or extend their conditions of stay in the UK will be charged a reduced fee for postal applications. Our analysis, which is set out in the recently published Regulatory Impact Assessment, indicates that at the level proposed, the postal charges were unlikely to have a significant impact on the UK's ability to attract and retain international students. However, in order to ensure that remaining to study in the UK remains a competitive option, we have decided that charges should be at a lower rate of £250 for the standard postal service. The higher, premium fee is an optional service which students can take advantage of if they so choose.

Mr. Rendel: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of grants of visa extensions for international students granted an incorrect period of extended leave in the last period for which figures are available. [214568]

Mr. Browne: We have put in place a central point of contact for correcting errors supported by UKvisas, UKCOSA and the British Council. All error cases reported to us are fully investigated and where there is a clear case of maladministration we will correct the error free of charge. We have successfully reduced delays in processing such cases . Targeted sampling of decisions in student cases to reduce error rate has identified training needs and reduced the numbers of students given incorrect leave in country.

Work Permits

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many work permits were granted in 2004 to health workers from overseas; and from which countries they have come. [214608]

Mr. Browne: The number of work permit applications granted in 2004 to health workers from overseas, is shown in the table by the nationality of the prospective worker. The figures include the number of initial approvals for health workers inside and outside of the UK during 2004.

Country	*2004*
Afghanistan	3
Albania	6
Algeria	8
Antigua	1
Argentina	5
Australia	783
Azerbaijan	1
Bahamas	3
Bahrain	1
Bangladesh	36
Barbados	29
Belarus	31
Bolivia	1
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	76
Brazil	22
British National Overseas	17
British Overseas Citizen.	1
Brunei	4
Bulgaria	436
Cameroon	98
Canada	119
Chile	3
China Peoples Republic of	965
Colombia	11
Congo	5
Croatia	7
Cyprus	4
Czech Republic	4
Dominica	8
Ecuador	1
Egypt	132
El Salvador	1
Ethiopia	6
Fiji	2
Gambia	23
Georgia	3
Ghana	521
Grenada	9
Guatemala	1
Guyana	201
Hong Kong (British)	9
Hong Kong (Chinese)	8
Hungary	9
India	8,605
Indonesia	4
Iran	67
Iraq	17
Israel	17
Ivory Coast	1
Jamaica	155
Japan	76
Jordan	46
Kazakhstan	2
Kenya	261
Kuwait	5
Latvia	1
Lebanon	15
Lesotho	50
Liberia	2
Libya	46
Lithuania	3
Macedonia	6
Malawi	74
Malaysia	185
Maldives	1
Malta	4
Mauritius	303
Mexico	4
Moldova	15
Mongolia	1
Morocco	1
Myanmar	70
Namibia	28
Nepal	128
New Zealand	237
Nigeria	880
Oman	4
Pakistan	862
Palestine	19
Palestinian Authority	1
Panama	1
Peru	2
Philippines	4,755

Country	*2004*
Poland	28
Romania	452
Russia	22
Rwanda	2
Saudi Arabia	4
Serbia	3
Seychelles	16
Sierra Leone	62
Singapore	50
Slovakia	14
Slovenia	1
Somalia	1
South Africa	2,627
South Korea	29
Sri Lanka	215
St. Kitts	3
St. Lucia	19
St. Vincent	11
Sudan	54
Swaziland	71
Syrian Arab Republic	48
Taiwan	2
Tanzania	43
Thailand	15
Trinidad and Tobago	179
Tunisia	3
Turkey	15
Uganda	69
Ukraine	125
United Arab Emirates	3
United States of America	260
Uruguay	11
Uzbekistan	12
Yemen Republic of	3
Yugoslavia	6
Zambia	356
Zimbabwe	1,782
Total	27,168

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Aircraft Charters

Chris Grayling: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much money his Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213709]

Mr. Leslie: The costs of chartering aircraft by the Department in each of the past five years are not separately identifiable within the Department's accounts without incurring disproportionate costs.

Travel by Ministers makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service. In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Crown Courts (Nurses)

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many Crown courts have a resident medical nurse. [215583]

Mr. Lammy: The Central Criminal Court (the Old Bailey) has a resident qualified nurse (matron). The matron is employed by the City and Corporation of London which owns and manages the Old Bailey Building. No other Crown Court has a resident medical nurse.

Departmental Policies (Pendle)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [215008]

Mr. Leslie: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is the Government Department responsible for upholding justice, rights and democracy. The Department's aim is to provide for effective and accessible justice for all, to ensure the rights and responsibilities of the citizen, and to modernise the law and constitution.

Currently, the Department has six strategic objectives, which cover the delivery of justice, civil and administrative law, protecting the vulnerable, modernising the constitution, increasing consumer choice and working in partnership with the independent judiciary. The Department also has seven Public Service Agreement targets to help deliver its strategic objectives.

Examples of the activity in 2004 to deliver these objectives include work with partners to make sure criminal trials are more efficient with the numbers of ineffective Crown Court trials falling from 24 per cent. in 2002–03 to 16 per cent. in September 2004. The rate has reduced from 31 per cent. to 25 per cent. for the same period in the magistrates' courts. The Department has also been involved in work to help people resolve their disputes in the most effective way, including pilots to test the effectiveness of court-based mediation. During 2004 there was a reduction from almost 49 per cent. to 41 per cent. in those cases that had eventually to be resolved by a hearing. Another area where pilots were used successfully was for all postal voting in four regions of England at the combined European and local elections in June 2004. Voter turnout doubled in the pilot regions compared with 1999.

The range of the Department's policies and actions is wide and the statistical information relating to all of that activity is not collected on a constituency basis. Consequently, the information requested in the question cannot be provided in the form requested except at a disproportionate cost. However, statistical information about the Department's activities can be found at: http://www.dca.gov.uk/statistics/statfr.htm as well as at www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

An example of the information available on those sites is data on persistent young offenders. The average number of days from arrest to sentence for persistent young offenders sentenced between August and October 2004 was 59 days in the Lancashire criminal justice area, which covers the constituency of Pendle. This compares with 124 days in the Lancashire criminal justice area in the 1997 calendar year.

Freedom of Information

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what his policy is in respect of the publication *(a)* on the departmental website and *(b)* by placing copies in the Library of (i) all or (ii) only a selection of the information disclosed in response to Freedom of Information requests since January. [215192]

Mr. Leslie: A full list of information released by the Department for Constitutional Affairs under the Freedom of Information Act is published on the departmental website at http://www.dca.gov.uk/rights/dca/disclosure.htm. Where information released by the Department is of wider public interest, the documents are also published on the departmental website.

Information released under the Freedom of Information Act by the Department for Constitutional Affairs is not routinely placed in the Library. Copies of all documents released by the Department under the Freedom of Information Act are available on request.

Guidance on Publication Schemes, issued by the Department for Constitutional Affairs in July 2002, recommended that where information is disclosed to an individual in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act, Departments and NDPBs should consider whether the information disclosed is of general interest and include released information in the Publication Scheme where appropriate.

Judicial Appointments (Northern Ireland)

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many judicial appointments there are in Northern Ireland from the pool of solicitors engaged in private practice and counsel engaged in private practice who are occasionally or mainly employed by the Crown Prosecution Service. [214613]

Mr. Leslie: Persons appointed to full-time judicial office may not continue in private practice. Persons appointed as deputy judges may continue to be engaged in private practice. We do not hold information on the nature of the work undertaken in practice by deputy judicial office holders.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many rape trials were listed as floating cases at *(a)* the Central Criminal Court, *(b)* Teesside Crown Court and *(c)* Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court during 2004. [215580]

Mr. Leslie: Records held centrally show that, during 2004, no rape trails were listed as floating cases at the Central Criminal Court, Teesside Crown Court and Newcastle upon Tyne Crown Court.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what criteria are used to determine whether to list rape trials at Crown courts as floating trials. [215581]

Mr. Leslie: Cases selected as floating trials are generally short and uncomplicated, involve few witnesses all of whom are located reasonably locally and, in the assessment of the listing officer, have a particularly good prospect of being reached. Certain cases, including rape cases, because of their sensitivity, should normally be given a fixed trial date.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what arrangements are made by the Courts Service for the presence at court of complainants in rape trials which are listed as floating trials. [215582]

Mr. Leslie: Court Service policy is that, Courts list rape trials as fixtures and not as floating trials. Arrangements for the presence of complainants, as with all prosecution witnesses, are a matter for the prosecuting solicitor. Complainants in rape trials would be offered a pre-court familiarisation visit. Arrangements can also be made for the complainant to enter the court building through a separate entrance or at a specific time and be met by a member of the court staff. Most venues of the Crown court now have dedicated witness facilities for witnesses to wait without fear of meeting the defendant. The Witness Service, which is present in all criminal courts, offers emotional and practical support for witnesses at court. Subject to judicial discretion, special measures, such as giving evidence by way of a video link or the use of screens in court, would also be available.

Vera Baird: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs what training judges in sexual violence cases are given in preparation for the trial of rape cases. [215584]

Mr. Leslie: Judicial training is the responsibility of the Judicial Studies Board (JSB), an independent body chaired by Lord Justice Keene.

No judge may hear a case involving rape or a serious sexual offence without first having received appropriate JSB training. This consists of a two-day (over three) residential seminar. The seminar programme includes talks on: research into public attitudes to sexual offending and the views of complainants and victims on the way in which sexual offences proceedings are handled; the policies and practices of the police and Crown Prosecution Service in handling serious sexual offences; issues of evidential and procedural law and practice which bear on the conduct of trials in such cases; sentencing issues and the assessment and treatment of sexual offenders in the community and in prison. Also included in the programme is a series of discussions, in small groups, of trial and sentencing issues. All judges who exercise the criminal jurisdiction will receive training on the provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 as part of a programme of training on the Criminal Justice Reforms, between January and March 2005.

Stationery

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Parliamentary Secretary, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department and its predecessors spent on *(a)* stationery and *(b)* office supplies in each year since 1997. [213853]

Mr. Leslie: My Department has national contracts for the provision of stationery and office supplies, with purchasing delegated to management unit level. Information regarding expenditure is shown in the table:

£

	Stationery	*Office supplies*
1997	n/a	n/a
1998	43,660	n/a
1999	50,541	1,910,865
2000	45,991	2,380,618
2001	40,025	2,509,747
2002	35,263	2,994,164
2003	30,894	3,111,605
2004	20,595	3,218,613

Prior to 1998 for stationery, and 1999 for office supplies, information regarding expenditure was not held centrally. Such information could only be provided at disproportionate cost

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ballymacarrett Parade

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken against the branch of the Monkstown Young Citizens Volunteers that displayed paramilitary regalia and flags associated with the Ulster Volunteer Force on the Ballymacarrett Loyal Orange Lodge District No.6 Parade on 12 July 2004. [213534]

Mr. Pearson: Police have advised that there was insufficient evidence to prosecute any person in connection with this matter.

Mr. McNamara: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what action has been taken against the two bands that participated in the District Loyal Orange Lodge No. 6 Ballymacarrett Parade without undergoing the required registration. [213535]

Mr. Pearson: Police have advised that a prosecution file has been submitted to the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently awaiting direction in the matter.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in the Province provide cognitive behavioural therapy within the NHS for those suffering with depression and anxiety. [215360]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave yesterday to question reference 212165.

Conferences

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many conferences were *(a)* attended by officials from his Department, *(b)* cancelled by and *(c)* facilitated by his Department in each year since 1997; and what the (i) cost to the Department and (ii) location was in each case. [205755]

Mr. Paul Murphy: This information is not held in the format requested and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Control Orders

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in what circumstances Control Orders as announced by the Home Secretary on 26 January 2005 could be used against suspected terrorists in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [215157]

Mr. Pearson: The Home Secretary wrote to the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland with an outline of his proposed policy on 21 January 2005. Until detailed legislative proposals are brought forward, it will not be possible to assess the applicability of control orders to Northern Ireland.

Dentists

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many NHS whole-time equivalent dentists there are in the Province. [215366]

Angela Smith: Whole-time equivalent (WTE) information is not captured centrally in respect of general dental practitioners, who are independent contractors, but it is possible to provide an estimate at Northern Ireland level based on a recent workload survey. Precise WTE information is available, however, in relation to those dentists directly employed by Trusts.

Both headcount and WTE figures for each of these, as at December 2004, are provided in the table.

	Headcount	*WTE*
General Dental Practitioners	734	552.0[1]
Trust Employed Dentists	164	117.6

[1] Figure estimated from a survey carried out by Department of Health Social Services and Public Safety in October 2004

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dentists in the Province left the NHS for the private sector in each of the last 10 years. [215375]

Angela Smith: The information requested is not available.

Diabetes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of diabetes sufferers in the Province received retinal screening in the last year for which figures are available. [214923]

Angela Smith: Accurate information on the total number of diabetics in Northern Ireland is not available and therefore an accurate percentage cannot be calculated. However, there is information on the number of diabetics who have undergone retinal screening and this is provided below.

From 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004, 12,165 people have undergone screening using digital imaging as part of the screening programme for diabetic retinopathy on behalf of the Eastern, Northern and Southern Health and Social Services Boards.

The Western Health and Social Services Board carries out a separate screening programme. The figures that are available cover the period 1 April 2004 to 31 October 2004 and indicate that 2,960 patients received retinal scans.

Health Care Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what incentives have been provided to discourage nurses from leaving *(a)* the profession and *(b)* the Province to work elsewhere. [215377]

Angela Smith: A review of the nursing workforce in March 2002 and subsequent annual reviews did not identify retention as a major issue. There are therefore no specific retention incentives in place. However, in relation to the workforce overall, it is recognised that retention is important in planning for future staffing. Employers have been asked to build this into their strategic planning.

The position is being kept under review through the Department's ongoing workforce planning process.

Magistrates

Rev. Ian Paisley: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list recently appointed magistrates broken down by those appointed on a *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time basis; and what their religion is in each case. [214614]

Mr. Leslie: I have been asked to reply.

The following appointments of resident magistrates and deputy resident magistrates were made during the last three years:

	Date Appointed
Mr. J Meehan RM	1 February 2002
Mrs F Bagnall RM	4 July 2003
Mr. L McNally RM	4 July 2003
Mr. G Miller deputy RM	1 October 2002
Mr. P Magill deputy RM	1 October 2002
Ms A Henderson deputy RM	1 October 2002
Mr. A Kennedy deputy RM	1 October 2002

There are currently no part-time resident magistrates. Personal information, in relation to community background, is not held for these appointees.

Mobile Phones

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many mobile telephones have been reported lost or stolen from the Department in each year since 1997; and what the cost was in each year. [214883]

Mr. Pearson: The details of the number of mobile phones lost or stolen from the Northern Ireland Office, together with the associated costs of replacements, in each of the years requested are laid out in the following table.

	Number of phones reported lost	*Number of phones reported stolen*	*Cost of replacements (£)*
1997	0	0	Nil
1998	0	0	Nil
1999	0	0	Nil
2000	0	0	Nil
2001	8	2	80.00
2002	2	1	Nil
2003	2	2	Nil
2004	0	6	225.12

This answer relates only to the Northern Ireland Office and does not include information in respect of the eleven departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

NHS Consultants

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many consultant vacancies there are in each health trust in the Province, broken down by specialty; and what the duration is of each vacancy. [215359]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave on 3 February 2005, *Official Report,* column 1064W.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he will answer the question tabled by the hon. Member for East Londonderry on 20 January 2005, reference 210847. [215782]

Mr. Gardiner: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given on 8 February 2005, *Official Report,* column 1488W.

Post-primary Admissions (Consultation)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government plans to deliver the consultation on new post-primary admissions criteria to every household in Northern Ireland. [215156]

Mr. Gardiner: All parents of school-age children have been given a leaflet providing them with details of the consultation and how they can respond to it. Advertisements have been placed in the three main newspapers *(Belfast Telegraph, Newsletter, Irish News)* giving details of the consultation and whilst it is not intended to deliver a copy of the consultation document to every home in Northern Ireland over 14,000 copies of the document have already been sent to education partners, schools, churches, political parties, and community and voluntary groups. The document can also be viewed and downloaded from the Department of Education website, and responses to the consultation can be made on-line. All those who prefer to receive a paper copy can do so by contacting the Department of Education.

Pre-school Children (Child Care)

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pre-school age children there were in Northern Ireland on the latest date for which figures are available. [214768]

Mr. Pearson: It is estimated that 87,288 children aged 0–3 were resident in Northern Ireland in mid-2003.

Radio Licences

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many commercial radio licences were in use in Northern Ireland at the end of 2004. [213975]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

There were 15 commercial radio services broadcasting in Northern Ireland at the end of 2004; seven local analogue services and eight digital sound programme services.

Southern Education and Library Board

Mr. Beggs: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the outcome was of the investigation undertaken by the Southern Education and Library Board against an officer accused of receiving bribes regarding school contract tenders; and if he will make a statement. [214818]

Mr. Gardiner: The Southern Education and Library Board completed an internal investigation into the allegations made against a board officer, in accordance with the formal procedure for dealing with disciplinary matters involving board officers. The investigation revealed that while a board officer had behaved inappropriately, board tendering procedures had not been compromised, nor had the board suffered a loss as a result of the officer's actions. Disciplinary action was taken against the officer for inappropriate behaviour.

The Department of Education, Northern Ireland Audit Office, and the PSNI were informed of the allegation, investigation, and outcome. The PSNI decided to take no action in the case.

I am satisfied that the board has handled this issue in an appropriate manner.

Speeding

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drivers have been caught speeding by the Police Service of Northern Ireland Traffic Branch since November 2004; and in which areas offences took place. [214664]

Mr. Pearson: The figures requested are set out in the following table:

Number of speeding detections (fixed penalty notice and safety camera) by roads policing officers—1 November 2004 to 4 February 2005

	Number of detections
Rural region	
DCU area	
Armagh DCU	21
Ballymena DCU	94
Ballymoney DCU	32
Banbridge DCU	339
Coleraine DCU	140
Cookstown DCU	16
Craigavon DCU	74
Down DCU	148
Dungannon DCU	74
Fermanagh DCU	38
Foyle DCU	330
Limavady DCU	79
Magherafelt DCU	207
Moyle DCU	19
Newry and Mourne DCU	624
Omagh DCU	162
Strabane DCU	12
Rural total:	2,409
Urban region	
Antrim DCU	126
Belfast East DCU	214
Belfast North DCU	90
Belfast South DCU	241
Belfast West DCU	9
Carrickfergus DCU	16
Castlereagh DCU	117
Larne DCU	12
Usburn DCU	133
Newtownabbey DCU	100
Newtownards DCU	96
North Down DCU	288
Urban total	1,442
Overall total	3,851

Traffic Wardens

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to change arrangements for employment of traffic wardens in Northern Ireland. [214507]

Mr. Pearson: The primary duty of traffic wardens is the enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions.

When decriminalised parking enforcement is introduced by the Department for Regional Development in mid-2006, the enforcement of parking and waiting restrictions will become the responsibility of that Department and be undertaken by traffic attendants employed by a specialist parking contractor for that purpose. Other functions currently undertaken by traffic wardens, not related to parking enforcement, will remain the responsibility of the PSNI.

Trauma Counsellors

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many specialist trauma counsellors are working in the Province. [215371]

Angela Smith: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer I gave yesterday to question reference 212184.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Claims (Processing)

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average time taken to process a claim for attendance allowance was in each year since 1975; [215248]

(2) what the average time taken to process a claim for disability living allowance was in each year since 1975. [215249]

Maria Eagle: The administration of attendance allowance is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran to Mr. Howard Flight, dated 10 February 2005:

In reply to two of your recent Parliamentary Questions about the Disability and Carers Service, the Minister for Disabled People, Maria Eagle, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken to process a claim for disability living allowance and a claim for attendance allowance was in each year since 1975.

	Disability living allowance		*Attendance allowance*	
	Target	*Achievement*	*Target*	*Achievement*
Days				
2004–05	39	36.6	24	18.7
2003–04	42	39.7	26	20.8
2002–03	43	42	27	24.2
Percentage				
2001–02	95% in 73 days	91.3	95% in 63 days	94.93
2000–01	95% in 73 days	88.7	95% in 63 days	92.1
1999–2000	85% in 53 days	79.03	85% in 53 days	87.47

Notes:

1. Disability living allowance was created in 1982.

2. Actual average clearance times are used from 2001–02 to report target achievement so comparisons to earlier periods are not possible.

3. The earliest data available is 1990–2000.

Source:

DCS Finance and Performance Management Team

Mr. Flight: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken to process a claim for pension credit was in each year for which figures are available. [215253]

Malcolm Wicks: The average actual clearance time for pension credit applications between October 2003, when pension credit was introduced, and March 2004 was 12.3 days. The average actual clearance time between April and December 2004 was 10.3 days.

Benefit Payments (Wales)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed sickness-related benefit in each constituency in Wales in the latest period for which figures are available. [213539]

Maria Eagle: The information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in each parliamentary constituency in Wales at 31 August 2004

	All	*IB*	*SDA*
Aberavon	7,000	6,400	600
Alyn and Deeside	3,500	3,100	*300
Blaenau Gwent	7,900	7,300	700
Brecon and Radnorshire	3,400	2,900	*500
Bridgend	5,000	4,300	700
Caernarfon	2,900	2,400	500
Caerphilly	8,500	7,700	800
Cardiff Central	3,600	3,200	*400
Cardiff North	3,100	2,800	*300
Cardiff South and Penarth	6,400	5,700	600
Cardiff West	5,500	4,900	600
Carmarthen East and Dinefwr	4,700	4,200	500
Carmarthen West and South Pembrokeshire	4,000	3,500	500
Ceredigion	4,400	4,000	*400
Clwyd South	4,700	4,100	600
Clwyd West	4,000	3,600	*300
Conwy	3,900	3,500	*500
Cynon Valley	6,900	6,300	600
Delyn	3,700	3,300	*400
Gower	5,000	4,500	600
Islwyn	5,500	5,200	*300
Llanelli	6,700	6,300	*400
Meirionnydd Nant Conwy	1,600	1,400	*200
Merthyr Tydfil and Rhymney	9,500	8,800	700
Monmouth	3,400	3,000	*400
Montgomeryshire	2,600	2,200	*300
Neath	6,400	5,900	500
Newport East	4,700	4,200	500
Newport West	4,800	4,400	*400
Ogmore	7,400	6,600	800
Pontypridd	6,300	5,800	500
Preseli Pembrokeshire	4,200	3,800	500
Rhondda	9,000	8,400	600
Swansea East	6,400	5,700	700
Swansea West	5,700	5,100	600
Torfaen	6,800	6,200	600
Vale of Clwyd	4,900	4,100	800
Vale of Glamorgan	5,000	4,600	*400
Wrexham	3,800	3,400	*400
Ynys Mon	4,200	3,800	*400

All incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) claimants in each parliamentary constituency in Wales at 31 August 2004

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Incapacity benefit figures include credits-only cases.

3. Figures marked "*" are based on very few sample cases and therefore subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

Source: IAD Information Centre, 5 per cent. sample.

Carer's Allowance

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have been declared ineligible for a carer's allowance in each of the last five years because they have a state pension. [211311]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

Carer's allowance is payable to carers of state pension age who meet the condition of entitlement to the allowance and do not receive a state pension, or where the weekly rate of state pension paid is lower than the weekly rate of carer's allowance. In those cases a reduced rate of carer's allowance is paid to bring the total amount of state pension and carers allowance paid up to the carer's allowance weekly rate.

These arrangements are in line with the basic principle of the social security system that only one benefit at a time can be paid for the same purpose. Carer's allowance and state pension cannot be paid at the same time because both of them are non-income-related benefits designed to provide a degree of replacement for lost or foregone income.

In cases where these arrangements preclude the payment of carer's allowance, the carer's entitlement to the allowance gives them access to the carer premium, currently £25.55 per week, in the income related benefits such as income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit and to the similar amount in pension credit.

Carer's allowance: total number of cases in each year from 2001 to 2004 in which carer's allowance was not in payment because a state pension was in payment.

	Number of cases in which carer's allowance is not in payment because a state pension was in payment [1, 2]
2001	19,690
2002	[3]34,770
2003	107,920
2004	197,305

[1] Figures for each year include people who claimed carer's allowance in that year but for whom the allowance could not be paid because they received state pension; people who had claimed in a previous year for whom the allowance could not be paid because they received state pension; and people who were receiving carer's allowance in that year or a previous year but ceased to receive CA when they began to receive a state pension.

[2] Figures for the number of cases are point in time only as at 31 August 2004, 31 August 2003, 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2001.

[3] From October 2002, the upper age limit was increased to allow carers age 65 and over to claim for the first time.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, 100 per cent. sample

Child Support Agency

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the reasons are for the 20-week delay in the making of maintenance awards by the Child Support Agency; what action is being taken to *(a)* issue interim awards and *(b)* rectify computer problems at the Agency; and what arrangements will be made to deal with cases of hardship where awards have been delayed. [211185]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Geoffrey Clifton-Brown, dated 11 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the reasons are for the 20-week delays in the making of maintenance awards by the Child Support Agency; what action is being taken to *(a)* issue interim awards and *(b)* rectifying computer problems at the Agency; and what arrangements will be made to deal with cases of hardship where awards have been delayed.

Issues associated with the implementation of changes to child support have been documented by the Secretary of State in his reports to Parliament and in evidence that both myself and the Secretary of State have given to the Work and Pensions Select Committee. In essence the computer service provided by EDS has not fully met our expectations and as a result work on hand is higher than forecast.

Where appropriate, where a case cannot be progressed because of a computer defect Agency staff will contact both parties with a view to putting interim payment arrangements in place. Alternatively, parents can calculate for themselves the appropriate amount to be paid by using the self calculator on the Agency's website.

We are working closely with EDS to remedy difficulties within their service and are hopeful that the main phase in the remediation process will be complete by the middle of 2005. If parents have lost out financially as a result of error or delay by the Agency then financial redress will be paid to them within the terms of the Departmental Guide to Financial Redress for Maladministration.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many applications for child support submitted to the Child Support Agency are still outstanding after *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months and *(c)* 12 months. [214369]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Gerry Steinberg, dated 11 November 2005:

In reply to your recent parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many applications for child support submitted to the Child Support Agency are still outstanding after *(a)* three months *(b)* six months and *(c)* 12 months.

I do not have the specific information to answer the question, because our data service does not provide it. I can tell you that at the end of December the Agency had received 547,545 applications, since the new scheme began, and of these, 277,767 have been cleared.

Mr. Steinberg: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints were received by the Child Support Agency in the past three years. [214370]

Mr. Pond: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Doug Smith. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Mike Isaac to Mr. Gerry Steinberg, dated 10 February 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. As he is currently on leave I am replying on his behalf.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many complaints were received by the Child Support Agency in the past three years. The figures you requested are summarised in the following table:

	Total written complaints
2001–02	27,735
2002–03	29,538
2003–04	49,215

From April 2003 we changed our complaints handling processes. This has ensured the more accurate recording of complaints and in particular count, for the first time, telephone complaints.

Civil Servants (Retirement)

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of the enhanced early retirement scheme for civil servants in his Department and its agencies was in each year from 1997–98 to 2003–04 and what the estimated cost will be in each year from 2004–05 to 2007–08; and if he will make a statement. [211656]

Maria Eagle: DWP was formed in June 2001 from the former Department of Social Security and parts of the former Department for Education and Employment, including the Employment Service.

Expenditure on enhanced early retirement schemes for each year from 1997–98 to 2000–01 is published in the Department of Social Security Resource Accounts and for each year from 2001–02 to 2003–04 in the Department for Work and Pensions Resource Accounts. Copies of the accounts are in the Library. Expenditure in 2004–05 is estimated at £27 million. It is not possible to provide estimates for each year between 2005–06 and 2007–08, but expenditure over the three year period is expected to be around £400 million.

Computers

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* computer terminals and *(b)* laptop computers are held by his Department and its executive agencies. [212025]

Jane Kennedy: According to the asset register, currently within the Department for Work and Pensions and its executive agencies there are 191,800 computer terminals and 13,800 laptops.

Some of these computers are not operational. The Department currently pays support costs for 158,100 of the terminals and 10,800 of the laptops. This supports staff working in more than one location and departmental flexible working practices. Of these, around 42,000 customer terminals and 1,500 laptops are not owned by DWP.

There are also a number of computers that are used to support business continuity requirements, as well as a number of computers that are waiting to be recycled in line with departmental policy.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter dated 20 December 2004 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to Ms. Julie Walker, transferred from the Treasury. [215124]

Alan Johnson: I replied to the hon. member on 31 January 2005.

Crisis Loan Applications

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest figure is for the average timescale for dealing with crisis loan applications; and if he will make a statement. [214319]

Mr. Pond: The Actual Average Clearance Time (AACT) for crisis loans in December 2004 was 1.4 working days at National level. Regional AACT clearance in December 2004 ranged from 1.1 to 1.6 working days.

This is within the current internal target of clearing crisis loans within an average of two working days. The minimum clearance time that can be recorded is one day.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the cost of *(a)* ministerial cars and drivers and *(b)* taxis for his Department in each of the last two years. [202432]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 85–86W.

The cost of taxi fares incurred by the Department for Work and Pensions is not recorded centrally and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies

Mr. Pike: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Burnley constituency, the effects on Burnley of his Department's policies and actions since 2 May 1997. [214715]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Burnley will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, whilst older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 24 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in North West England are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Burnley who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Burnley

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	6,900
2002	7,100
2003	7,500
2004	7,900

Source:

DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Burnley, the proportion in employment has risen to 77.3 per cent. Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over-50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 1,800 in Burnley alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,200 families in Burnley.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,975 pensioners in Burnley are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £39.67 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. respectively. Some 15,700 pensioners in Burnley have benefited from this increase.

Linda Perham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as closely as possible to the constituency, the effects of his Department's policies since 2 May 1997 on the constituents of Ilford, North. [215211]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Ilford, North will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the national carers strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 18 per cent. of adults and 4 per cent. of children in the London region are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Ilford, North who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Ilford North

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,800
2002	5,700
2003	6,100
2004	6,000

Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.
Source:
DWP Information Centre

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Ilford, North, the proportion in employment has risen to 73.1 per cent.

Our new deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the new deals, with 990 in Ilford, North alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18-years-old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,300 families in Ilford, North.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 3,695 pensioners in Ilford, North are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £53.42 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. respectively. Some 16,300 pensioners in Ilford, North have benefited from this increase.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical information relating as directly as possible to Pendle constituency, the effects on Pendle of his Department's policies and activities since 2 May 1997. [214978]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Pendle will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled 3 and 4-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable, to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, whilst older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 24 per cent. of adults and 5 per cent. of children in the North West are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Pendle who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Pendle

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	5,900
2002	6,200
2003	6,500
2004	6,500

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Pendle, the proportion in employment has risen to 79.2 per cent. Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over-50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with 1,880 in Pendle alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,000 families in Pendle.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–5 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,545 pensioners in Pendle are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £40.76 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70+ payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80+ annual payment is available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent. respectively. Some 15,000 pensioners in Pendle have benefited from this increase.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Hemsworth constituency, the effects of changes to departmental policy since 1997 on Hemsworth constituency. [214495]

Jane Kennedy: We have undertaken a fundamental overhaul of the welfare system, transforming it to an active system that fights poverty, creates opportunity and helps people become self-sufficient and independent.

Since 2001, the Government have significantly extended and improved civil rights for disabled people in areas such as employment, education, access to goods and services and transport. Disabled people in Hemsworth will have benefited from these improvements in disability rights. Similarly, families with severely disabled three and four-year-old children who are unable, or virtually unable to walk will have benefited from the Government's decision to lower the minimum age entitlement to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance from April 2001, while older and less well off carers have gained extra help through the provisions within the National Carers Strategy.

In 2002–03 we estimate there were around 10 million adults (22 per cent.) and 0.7 million children (5 per cent.) in Great Britain likely to be covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).

The figures can be broken down to regional level which shows that 25 per cent. of adults and 4 per cent. of children in Yorkshire and Humber are likely to be covered by the provisions of the DDA.

Information on the numbers of customers in Hemsworth who are in receipt of disability living allowance (DLA) and attendance allowance (AA) is in the table.

Hemsworth

Operational year	*DLA/AA recipients*
2001	9,000
2002	9,200
2003	9,400
2004	9,600

Source:
DWP Information Centre. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100 and are from a 5 per cent. sample at 31 August each year.

Through Jobcentre Plus, we are promoting work as the best form of welfare for people of working age. The number of people in work is at historically high levels of over 28.5 million; in Hemsworth, the proportion in employment has risen to 73.4 per cent.

Our New Deals have helped lone parents, the young unemployed, the long-term unemployed, disabled people, the over 50s and partners of unemployed people to move from benefit into work. Nationally over 1.2 million people have been helped into work by the New Deals, with over 2,150 in Hemsworth alone.

Significant progress has been made in eradicating child poverty and the latest figures (for 2002–03) show that, in the UK, there were over half a million fewer children in relative low income than there were in 1996–97. Since 2001–02 incomes for lone parents in receipt of benefit have risen by more than prices or the cost of living. In April 2005 the child allowance rate in income support for a child up to 18 years old will have been increased by 40 per cent. since 2001–02. Child rates in income support and jobseeker's allowance are also being increased above inflation in April 2005 in line with child tax credit upratings. All of this has benefited 2,100 families in Hemsworth.

We want all pensioners to have a decent and secure income in retirement and to share fairly in the rising prosperity of the country and our first priority has been to help the poorest pensioners. The Government will be spending nearly £10 billion more in 2004–05 (in 2004–05 prices) on pensioners as a result of measures introduced since 1997, with around half going to the poorest third.

Our reforms include the state second pension, which helps more future pensioners build up better pensions, especially carers. Pension credit, introduced from October 2003, provides a contribution to a guaranteed minimum income for those aged 60 and over and, for the first time, those over aged 65 and over may be rewarded for savings and income. As of December 2004, around 4,375 pensioners in Hemsworth are receiving pension credit, with an average award of £40.00 per week.

We know that older people are disproportionately affected by fuel poverty. This winter (2004–05) we have again made available a winter fuel payment of £200 for each eligible household with someone aged 60 or over and £300 to those with someone aged 80 or over to help with their fuel bills. Additionally, for this year, eligible households with someone aged 70 or over will receive the one-off 70 plus payment of £100 to help with living expenses including council tax bills. It is paid with the winter fuel payment.

The constituency data on winter fuel payments and the additional 80 plus annual payment are available in the Library.

Since 1997 single pensioners and pensioner couples have seen a real terms increase in their basic state pension of 7 per cent. and 8 per cent., respectively. Some 15,700 pensioners in Hemsworth have benefited from this increase.

Disability Employment Advisers

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the *(a)* turnover rate and *(b)* average caseload has been for disability employment advisers in each of the last 10 years; [214629]

(2) how many disability employment advisers there have been in each of the last 10 years, broken down by region. [214630]

[illegible]ne Kennedy: The table shows how many disability employment advisers there were per region for the period April 2003 to March 2004.

Region	*Number of disability employment advisers*
Scotland	85
Wales	44
North East	47
Yorkshire and The Humber	59
North West	122
East Midlands	41
West Midlands	55
East of England	45
South West	52
South East	66
London	87
Total	703

The remaining requested information is not available.

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the activity of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training in the UK in the last 12 months; and if he will list the publications and newsletters published by the centre over that period. [215276]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training is usually known as "Cedefop" from its French title. Its activities in the UK in 2004 focused on two key areas:

(i) Cedefop study visits for vocational training policy makers and practitioners included six visits to the UK by practitioners and policy makers from other EU member states, during 2004, each lasting around five days. 74 visitors from 23 European countries visited England, Scotland and Wales during the period and 57 people from here studied vocational training systems in 21 countries across the EU.

(ii) Cedefop's "Refer" network provides information on developments in vocational education and training across the European Union. It comprises exchange of information between national consortia in each EU country. The network encourages and facilitates mutual exchanges of information; promotes the creation of partnerships; and provides consortium members with an opportunity to broaden their contacts with other international organisations in Europe.

Publications and Newsletters

A list of the publications and newsletters produced by Cedefop in 2004 can be obtained by accessing its website at www.cedefop.eu.int/publications and going to "publications catalogue".

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if the Financial Assistance Scheme will cover circumstances where an employer was solvent prior to their pension scheme being wound up; and if he will make a statement. [216320]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I gave on 2 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 64–66WS.

Five-year Strategy

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the evidential basis was in terms of absolute figures for spending on *(a)* benefits, *(b)* tax credits and *(c)* gross domestic product in each year since 1997 for the statement on page 14 of the Five Year Plan (Cm 6447) that welfare spending has declined from 12.3 per cent. to 11.6 per cent. of gross domestic product since 1997. [215546]

Mr. Pond: The figures are given in the table. This shows that spending has declined from 12.3 per cent. to 11.6 per cent. of GDP since 1997.

£ billion, rounded to nearest £100 million

	Benefits[1]	*Tax credits*[2]	*Gross product*[3]
1996–97	95.2	0.0	773.4
1997–98	96.4	0.0	822.8
1998–99	98.7	0.0	868.4
1999–2000	102.3	1.1	919.1
2000–2001	104.7	4.6	961.9
2001–02	110.2	4.8	1,004.1
2002–03	115.1	6.0	1,057.8
2003–04	119.4	9.4	1,115.9
2004–05	125.0	11.8	1,176.7

[1] Includes DWP benefit spending, non-DWP housing and council tax benefits, Northern Ireland benefit spending, War Pensions both before and after the transfer from DWP to the Veterans Agency in 2002 and child benefit both before and after the transfer from DWP to the Inland Revenue in 2003.

[2] Figures provided by HM Treasury at pre-Budget report 2004 and earlier spending rounds, less DWP spending on child amounts in income support and jobseeker's allowance (which is included in the Benefits line).

[3] GDP figures are those published on 2 December 2004.

Free Television Licences

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners are in receipt of free television licences in Warrington, North. [214968]

Estelle Morris: I have been asked to reply.

TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Warrington, North constituency in 2003–04 was 4,815, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Dalyell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his answer of 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, columns 1384–86W, and of 24 January 2005, on incapacity benefit, when he expects to complete his exploration of ways of allowing people with progressive conditions to be able to continue permitted work beyond the initial 52 weeks without being limited to earnings of £20. [211428]

Maria Eagle: We have completed our consideration of this issue. In deciding to whom this new arrangement should apply, we have adopted exemption from the personal capability assessment (PCA) as the criterion. This is in line with the approach adopted for other purposes, for example, in the Pathways to Work Initiative, where the full mandatory provisions are not applied to clients who are exempt from the PCA. We are planning to bring these changes into effect in 2006.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reason incapacity benefit claimants have to register within one month of moving into a job for the 52 week linking rule to apply. [214627]

Maria Eagle: The 52 week linking protection applies to people who have started work or training within seven days of leaving benefit. In order that the reasons for leaving benefit are correctly identified people are required to provide this information within one month. This is considered a reasonable time for the information to be supplied particularly as such a change of circumstances needs to be reported to local Jobcentre Plus and Social Security offices promptly so that benefit is not overpaid. On receipt of the information the incapacity benefit computer system is noted so that the protection is applied when a further claim is received within 52 weeks.

We are currently reviewing the linking rules with a view to improving their effectiveness.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many new incapacity benefit claimants had claimed incapacity benefit in the previous 12 months, broken down by the reason for which they previously left incapacity benefit, with particular reference to those who *(a)* failed the personal capability assessment, *(b)* failed to attend a medical and *(c)* failed to provide information. [215777]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people left incapacity benefit to return to work in each year since 1997. [215778]

Maria Eagle: National data are available only for benefit leavers returning to work who report this to the Department. Research suggests the numbers actually returning to work is significantly higher. In Pathways areas we are getting double the level of improvement in the number of recorded job entries compared to other areas. Between October 2003 and October 2004, 8,300 people were helped into work in the Pathways areas.

The available information is in the table.

All incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) terminations in the quarters shown recorded as a "Return to work"

Quarter ending	*IB/SDA*	*IB*	*SDA*
February 1999	6,500	6,200	[1]200
May 1999	5,900	5,600	[1]200
August 1999	5,100	4,900	[1]200
November 1999	7,000	6,700	[1]300
February 2000	5,300	5,100	[1]200
May 2000	6,600	6,300	[1]300
August 2000	6,800	6,400	[1]300
November 2000	7,400	7,200	[1]200
February 2001	6,100	6,000	[1]100
May 2001	6,400	6,100	[1]200
August 2001	6,600	6,500	[1]100
November 2001	8,100	7,700	[1]300
February 2002	5,100	5,000	[1]100
May 2002	6,000	5,700	[1]200
August 2002	5,800	5,600	[1]200
November 2002	7,600	7,500	[1]100
February 2003	4,900	4,800	[2]—
May 2003	6,200	6,100	[1]200
August 2003	6,600	6,500	[1]100
November 2003	7,200	7,000	[1]200
February 2004	5,200	5,200	[1]100
May 2004	6,200	6,100	[1]100
August 2004	6,600	6,500	[1]100

[1] Figures are based on very few sample cases and therefore subject to a high degree of sampling error and should be used as a guide to the current situation only.

[2] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Figures are not available prior to February 1999.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source:

Information Directorate, 5 per cent. sample.

International Labour Organisation

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether his Department informed the International Labour Organisation that it would withhold its funding contribution if it published the report Forced Labour and Migration to the UK; and if he will make a statement. [215870]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has not informed the International Labour Organisation that it would withhold its funding contribution if the ILO published the report. Officials are in regular contact with the ILO about this matter and, in conjunction with other Government Departments, are actively looking at the detail of the draft report. We will consider the issues of content and publication further when we have received their recommendations.

New Deal

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many participants in the new deal for young people have joined *(a)* once, *(b)* twice, *(c)* three times and *(d)* more than three times since its introduction. [213898]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has been successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work, including over half a million young people through the new deal for young people.

Although some people will re-experience unemployment after leaving the new deal, they will have added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future. People re-entering the new deal move into work more quickly than they did the first time they were on the programme because they have recent experience of work, and have more jobsearch skills.

The requested information is in the table.

Individuals who have participated in new deal for young people

	Number
Total number of individuals who have started new deal for young people	909,230
People starting the programme once	674,280
People starting the programme twice	174,020
People starting the programme three times	49,110
People starting the programme more than three times	11,280

Notes:

1. Data is from January 1998 to September 2004.

2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database, DWP Information Directorate

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many job brokers there have been within the new deal for disabled people scheme in each year since it started. [214625]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in the table.

Number of job brokers on the new deal for disabled programme

Financial year	*Number of job brokers*
2001–02	61
2002–03	57
2003–04	56
2004–05	56

Source:

New Deal for Disabled People Contract Management Team data

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on the new deal for disabled people in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms since its creation; what the cost has been (i) per client and (ii) per eligible claimant since its creation; and how much of the extra funding announced in the pre-Budget report 2004 has been (A) allocated and (B) spent. [214633]

Jane Kennedy: The information on expenditure on the new deal for disabled people in cash and real terms is in the table.

Expenditure on the new deal for disabled people in cash and real terms

£ million

	Admin expenditure	*Programme expenditure*	*Total expenditure*
Cash terms			
1998–99	1	—	1
1999–2000	7	15	22
2000–01	7	7	14
2001–02	6	4	10
2002–03	15	16	31
2003–04	15	28	43
Real terms (2003–04 prices)			
1998–99	0.9	—	0.9
1999–2000	6.3	13.6	19.9
2000–01	6.4	6.4	12.8
2001–02	5.6	3.8	9.4
2002–03	14.6	15.6	30.2
2003–04	15.0	28.0	43.0

Source:

Departmental Report 2004

It is not possible to give the actual cost per customer, as clients' needs vary greatly as does the type of help they need. The £30 million secured in the pre-Budget report 2004 is funding for 2005–06, therefore none of this funding has yet been allocated or spent.

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total expenditure on the new deal has been since its commencement. [214848]

Jane Kennedy: The information is in Table 7 on page 171 of the 2004 DWP Departmental Report, which is available in the Library.

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what additional funds have been allocated to the new deal for disabled people (NDDP) up to March 2006; and how much has been allocated to the NDDP for the years to *(a)* March 2007, *(b)* March 2008 and *(c)* March 2009. [215775]

Jane Kennedy: As announced by my right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his pre-Budget report on 2 December 2004, an additional £30 million has been allocated to the new deal for disabled people for the period to March 2006. A limited procurement exercise is currently under way to secure the additional provision.

The current new deal for disabled people is due to end in March 2006 and decisions have yet to be taken about the form and funding of provision beyond that date.

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people have left the new deal for young people, broken down by constituency; what percentage in each constituency found sustained jobs; and if he will make a statement; [212008]

(2) how many people in each parliamentary constituency *(a)* have started, *(b)* have left, *(c)* are participating in, *(d)* have found jobs following and *(e)* have found sustained jobs following (i) the new deal for young people and (ii) the new deal for over-25s. [212011]

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of the total number of people who have entered the new deal 25 plus have found sustained employment since the programme was launched *(a)* in Great Britain and *(b)* broken down by constituency. [215499]

Jane Kennedy: The new deal has been successful in helping more than 1.2 million people into work. Long-term youth unemployment has been virtually eradicated and long-term adult unemployment has fallen by three-quarters since 1997.

New deal for young people has contributed to this success by helping more than half a million young people into work, and over 200,000 long-term unemployed adults have been helped into work through new deal 25 plus.

People who return to jobseeker's allowance after finding a job through the new deal have added to their skills and experience, making it easier for them to find a job in the future. In addition, when they re-enter the new deal, people also move into work more quickly than they did the first time they were on the programme because they have recent experience of work and have more jobsearch skills.

The requested information has been placed in the Library.

Pathway to Work

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has so far been spent on the Pathway to Work pilots, broken down by *(a)* jobcentre plus services, *(b)* payments to claimants, *(c)* payments to voluntary sector providers and *(d)* other categories of payments. [215529]

Maria Eagle: The available information is in the table.

Expenditure on Pathway to Work pilots

	£
Jobcentre Plus services	16,252,190
Customer payments	6,154,550
Other categories of payment	24,586,450
Total	46,993,190

Notes:

1. The figure for Jobcentre Plus services is actual spend. The figures shown for customer payments and other categories are estimated.

2. Information concerning payments to voluntary sector providers is not available.

Source:

DWP administrative data.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many specially trained personal advisers there were in the *(a)* original and *(b)* new Pathways to Work pilot areas; and what the average caseloads are of each. [214635]

Maria Eagle: The number of specially trained personal advisers in the seven existing Pathways to Work pilot areas is 134 in total, broken down as follows:

	Number
Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taf	24
Derbyshire	26
East Lancashire	18
Essex	20
Gateshead and South Tyneside	12
Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute	26
Somerset	8

The Department is currently preparing costing information for the new Pathways to Work areas and expects this to be available by the end of the current financial year. This will facilitate recruitment of the appropriate number of personal advisers to be specially trained.

The information requested on the average caseload of a personal adviser is not available.

Pension Credit

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what statistics his Department has collected on *(a)* take-up and *(b)* eligibility to pension credit since 31 October 2004; and if he will collect and publish statistics on pension credit eligibility at constituency level. [214691]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on levels of pension credit take-up and eligibility is not collected directly. Estimates of eligibility are derived from the yearly Family Resources Survey (FRS). Current estimates are projected forward using the FRS for 2002–03 and modelled with the Department's Policy Simulation Model. Robust figures on eligibility and take-up will not be available until full analysis of the FRS for 2003–04 and will be published in the National Statistics publication "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". The FRS does not provide enough information to break down figures to constituency level.

Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each Government Office Region and constituency at 31 December 2004 was published in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of pension credit in each Greater London borough are receiving *(a)* less than 10p, *(b)* 10p to 19p, *(c)* 20p to 29p, *(d)* 30p to 39p, *(e)* 40p to 49p, *(f)* 50p to 59p, *(g)* 60p to 69p, *(h)* 70p to 79p, *(i)* 80p to 89p and *(j)* 90p to 99p per week. [214790]

Malcolm Wicks: The figures in question for individual London boroughs are too small to be reliable. The information for inner and outer London areas is given in the following table. An award of pension credit of less than 10p per week is not payable unless the person is receiving another benefit payable with pension credit.

Pension credit awards of less than £1, London Government office region (GOR), 31 December 2004

	All	*Less than 10p*	*10p-19p*	*20p-29p*	*30p-39p*	*40p-49p*
London GOR	[illegible]	35	25	30	20	45
Outer London						
East and North East	150	10	10	10	5	15
West and North West	95	5	5	[1]—	5	10
South	70	5	[1]—	5	—	5
Inner London						
West	50	5	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	5
East	135	10	5	5	10	10

	50p-59p	*60p-69p*	*70p-79p*	*80p-89p*	*90p-99p*
London GOR	40	60	75	75	100
Outer London					
East and North East	5	15	30	20	25
West and North West	10	10	10	15	25
South	10	10	10	10	15
Inner London					
West	5	5	10	5	10
East	10	15	15	25	25

[1] Nil or negligible.

Notes:

1. Data as at 10 December 2004 have been rated up to give month end figures.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, 100 per cent. sample.

Paul Holmes: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people are eligible to receive the pension credit severe disability premium; and how many people receive it; [215151]

(2) how many people are eligible to receive the pension credit carers premium; and how many people receive it. [215152]

Malcolm Wicks: At 31 August 2004, the most recent date for which figures are available, approximately 584,600 recipients of pension credit in Great Britain were in receipt of the extra amount payable to those with severe disability and 129,600 were in receipt of the extra amount payable to carers. Estimates of how many people are eligible to receive these additional amounts are not available.

Notes:

1. Data has been taken from a 5 per cent. sample and is subject to a degree of sampling variation.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source:

IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed pension credit in each constituency in Scotland in the latest period for which figures are available. [215391]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit in each constituency at 31 December 2004 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report, which was published on 3 February. A copy of the report is in the Library.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have received pension credit in North Durham since its inception. [214679]

Malcolm Wicks: Approximately 5,800 households in the constituency of Durham North, comprising approximately 7,100 individuals, have received pension credit since it was introduced in October 2003.

Notes:

1. Data has been taken as at November 2003, February 2004, May 2004 and August 2004.

2. The total number of pension credit claimants has been derived by summing customers who existed on at least one of the quarterly data extracts referred to in note 1.

3. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

4. Figures are based on a 5 per cent. sample and are subject to a degree of sampling variation.

5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

6. Pension credit replaced the minimum income guarantee from 6 October 2003.

7. Individual recipients may include a small number of partners under the age of 60.

Source: IAD Information Centre, Department for Work and Pensions, five per cent. sample.

Pension Payment

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance has been issued to post offices on procedures to be followed in relation to payment of pensions over Post Office counters to people who have not set up Post Office accounts or supplied bank details to the Benefits Agency; and if he will make a statement. [214842]

Mr. Pond: The Department has not issued any guidance to Post Office Ltd. concerning those pensioners who have not yet provided account details or opened a Post Office card account. The responsibility for issuing guidance to Post Office staff on benefit and pensions matters rests with Post Office Ltd., following the appropriate level of consultation with DWP.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have had payment books withdrawn by Post Office staff on instructions from the Benefits Agency relating to new pension payment arrangements. [214843]

Mr. Pond: None.

The Pension Service would not issue instructions to Post Office staff to withdraw an order book as part of the process of conversion to direct payment.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money the average pensioner in North Durham received in *(a)* 2001 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [214462]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much money the average pensioner received in Warrington, North in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* the last year for which figures are available. [214966]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not available.

Personal Capability Assessments

Mr. Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of new claimants underwent their personal capability assessment within 12 weeks of applying for the claim in each year since 1997. [215774]

Maria Eagle: The information is not available.

Return to Work

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assistance is available to people with disabilities to return to work in Hendon; how many people have taken up this assistance in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [211036]

Maria Eagle: There are a number of programmes, such as Access to Work, Work Preparation and Workstep designed to help disabled people return to work. Jobcentre Plus also offers interviews with a personal adviser to all disabled people making new or repeat claims to qualifying benefits to ensure they are aware of the help and opportunities available to them.

Access to Work is a specialist disability programme, which provides practical advice and support to help disabled people enter or stay in paid employment.

Work Preparation is an individually tailored, work-focused programme that enables disabled people to address barriers associated with their disability and prepare for working with the confidence necessary to achieve and sustain their job goal.

Workstep provides support in jobs for disabled people who have more complex barriers to finding and keeping work but who, with the right support, can work effectively and develop in their job. Longer-term support continues to be available for those who need it and is a major element of the programme.

Details of the number of disabled people helped to return to work through Access to Work, Work Preparation and Workstep in each of the last five years are not available at constituency or Jobcentre Plus district level.

Disabled people may also receive help through the new deal programme. New deal for disabled people is a voluntary programme which gives customers on qualifying disability or health-related benefits in England, Scotland and Wales access to a network of Job Brokers. Job Brokers work with customers to help them compete in the labour market and support them in finding and keeping a job.

Disabled people may also receive help through other New Deal programmes such as the new deal for young people, new deal 25 plus, new deal 50+, and new deal for lone parents. Over the last five years we estimate that around 430 disabled people have been supported through these new deal programmes in Hendon, of which around 180 have entered work.

Information relating to people supported through the New Deal for Disabled People is not available at constituency level. The available information for the North London Jobcentre Plus district is in the following table.

Number of people who have benefited from the new deal for disabled people in North London Jobcentre Plus district

	Individual starts	*Individuals into work*
July 2001 to September 2001	0	0
October 2001 to September 2002	120	10
October 2002 to September 2003	270	70
October 2003 to September 2004	250	110
Total	640	190

Notes:

1. Starts figures relate to the number of individuals registering with an NDDP Job Broker.

2. Individuals into work figures relate to the number of individuals gaining NDDP Job Broker jobs and individuals gaining NDDP Jobcentre Plus jobs.

3. The NDDP programme is available to people in receipt of a disability or health related benefit and started in July 2001.

4. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 10 and for this reason components may not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

New Deal Evaluation Database

Secondment

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the people working within his Department on secondment from the private sector, broken down by *(a)* the organisation or industry they came from and *(b)* the policy responsibilities they have been given. [208633]

Maria Eagle: There are currently 14 inward secondees in the Department, 12 of whom are listed. We have omitted two secondees operating at junior level as we are not able to contact them to comply with the Data Protection Act.

Name	*Employed By*	*Responsibilities*
Michael Foley	IBM	Child Support Reforms (CSR) Project Manager
Joan Christmas	Penna	Public sector mobility brokerage policies
Cay Stratton	Financial Services industry	Director of National Employment Panel (NEP)
Caroline Haynes	Centrica	Head of National Employment Panel (NEP) Performance Committee
Mary Allan	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Rhona Walker	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Irene Gardner	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Peter Boulton	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Marie McGrath	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Jane Foster	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Sharon Cook	Triage Central Ltd.	Enhancement of Private Sector Led Delivery of New Deal
Faisa Chowdhury	At Work	Outreach Advisor with specific responsibility for engaging with people from Ethnic Minority communities
Alison Wasbourne	The Wise Group	Partnership Manager responsible for building networks with other agencies in the East end of the city
Scott Bonsall	Liberata	Assisting in the Implementation of BFI recommendations within the Region as part of a Joint Regional Board Initiative

State Pension

Mr. Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost in each of the next six financial years, net of savings in means-tested benefits and additional income tax revenues, of paying a full basic state pension to everyone over state pension age, regardless of contribution record. [214513]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 7 February 2005]:* The information is in the table.

	Net cost (£ million)
2005–06	5.0
2006–07	5.0
2007–08	5.1
2008–09	5.2
2009–10.	5.2
2010–11	5.1

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain only, in 2004–05 price terms, using the Gross Domestic Product deflator index, rounded to the nearest £100 million. They assume overnight introduction for all citizens above state pension age.

2. It is assumed that the rules are changed from 2005–06 and that basic state pension is increased in line with prices. It is assumed that all individuals above state pension age (65 for men; 60 for women) receive the full category A rate of basic state pension (currently £79.60 per week) regardless of contribution record or marital status.

3. Gross additional basic state pension costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with Budget 2004 assumptions and use 2002 based population projections. basic state pension costs refer to the additional costs after allowing for consequential changes to national insurance fund benefits and non-income-related vote benefits.

4. Costs are net of income related benefits and income tax. For illustrative purposes it is assumed that the proportion of savings calculated is constant after 2006–07.

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average income of state pensioner households in England and Wales was in each year from 1991 to 2004. [215120]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested that is available is in the tables.

The pensioners' incomes series has been based on data from the Family Resources Survey since 1994–95 and income information for FRS data is only available for the financial years 1994–95 to 2002–03

Family Expenditure Survey (FES) before 1994–95. Due to methodological differences between the surveys, results from FES and FRS can not be directly compared.

Table A: The mean incomes of all pensioner units in England and Wales 1994–95 to 2002–03

£

	1994–95	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*
Gross income	221	218	231	234	245
Net BHC income	190	190	200	202	209
Net AHC income	161	161	171	174	183
Gross income from state retirement pension	95	91	95	95	97

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Gross income	252	267	275	275
Net BHC income	216	227	234	236
Net AHC income	189	203	211	213
Gross income from state retirement pension	100	100	106	108

Table B: The mean incomes of pensioner couples in England and Wales 1994–95 to 2002–03

£

	1994–95	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*
Gross income	319	312	334	341	352
Net BHC income	271	268	288	289	296
Net AHC income	242	240	259	262	273
Gross income from state retirement pension	127	121	126	127	129

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Gross income	359	384	396	383
Net BHC income	302	319	331	324
Net AHC income	277	299	310	305
Gross income from state retirement pension	132	132	139	142

Table C: The mean incomes of single pensioners in England and Wales 1994–95 to 2002–03

£

	1994–95	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*
Gross income	160	160	166	166	176
Net BHC income	140	141	146	146	153
Net AHC income	111	112	117	118	126
Gross income from state retirement pension	75	73	76	74	77

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*
Gross income	181	192	194	200
Net BHC income	159	167	170	175
Net AHC income	131	141	145	150
Gross income from state retirement pension	78	79	84	85

Notes:

1. Incomes are presented as pounds per week. Figures for incomes are given in 2002–03 prices and rounded to the nearest pound.
2. The pensioners' incomes series analysis is for pensioner units, which are either: single pensioners (defined as. people over state pension age) or pensioner couples (defined as married or cohabiting pensioners where the man is over state pension age.)
3. BHC stands for "before housing costs' and AHC for "after housing costs'.
4. State retirement pension includes the basic state pension, as well as earnings related-related component from SERPS or its predecessor graduated
5. Net income is income from all sources deducting income tax and council tax. retirement benefit.

Source:

Tables A, B and C: Based on data from The Pensioners' Incomes Series 2002–03 (which is based on data from the Family Resources Survey).

Winter Fuel Payment

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in each electoral ward in Dartford constituency claimed the winter fuel allowance in 2003–04; and how many claimed the allowance in 2004–05. [214974]

Malcolm Wicks: The number of people in each electoral ward in the Dartford constituency who received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 is in the following table. Figures are not yet available for winter 2004–05 but we expect the numbers to be similar.

Ward	Winter fuel payment recipients
Bean and Darenth	850
Brent	1,185
Castle	70
Farningham, Horton Kirby and South Darenth	990
Fawkham and West Kingsdown	1,415
Greenhithe	530
Hartley and Hodsall Street	1,680
Heath	1,180
Joyce Green	785
Joydens Wood	1,690
Littlebrook	760
Longfield, New Barn and Southfleet	1,635
Newtown	840
Princes	1,075
Stone	935
Sutton-at-Hone and Hawley	850
Swanscombe	995
Town	395
West Hill	1,015
Wilmington	1,010

Notes:

1. All wards based on Census Wards—those current as at April 2003.

2. The wards of Farningham, Norton Kirby and South Darenth, Fawkham and West Kingsdown and Hartley and Hodsall Street are included as they are partially in the Dartford parliamentary constituency.

3. WFP Data is the latest currently available, winter 2003–04.

4. All benefit counts at ward level are rounded to a multiple of 5.

Source:

IAD Information Centre

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received the winter fuel allowance in the Easington constituency in 2004. [214930]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of people in the Easington constituency who received a winter fuel payment in winter 2003–04 is in the Library. Information on winter 2004–05 is not yet available but we expect the number to be similar.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are in receipt of the winter fuel allowance in Warrington, North; and how much has been spent on this allowance in the constituency. [214967]

Malcolm Wicks: Information about the number of payments at each rate to people in the Warrington, North constituency is in the Library.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have received the winter fuel allowance in North Durham since its inception. [214680]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on the number of pensioners in North Durham who have benefited from winter fuel payments in each year for which figures are available is in the Library.

Workstep Scheme

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many sheltered workshops approved under the Workstep programme are operating in each of the counties and metropolitan districts in the northern region. [212125]

Maria Eagle: Sheltered workshops are now referred to as supported factories/businesses. There are 11 Workstep supported factories/businesses operating in the Jobcentre Plus north east region. The north east region was formerly known as the as the Jobcentre Plus northern region and includes the Berwick-upon-Tweed constituency.

Remploy has eight supported factory sites in the north east: Ashington (Northumberland); Gateshead (Tyne and Wear); Hartlepool (County Durham); Jarrow (Tyne and Wear); Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Newcastle); Spennymoor (County Durham); Stockton (Cleveland) and Sunderland (Sunderland).

This is in addition to Palantine Beds in Newcastle-upon-Tyne (operated by Newcastle city council); Shaw Print in Northumberland (operated by Shaw Project) and Ayresome Industries in Middlesbrough (operated by Shaw Trust).

Shaw Project also has a number of small businesses that operate as part of the factory element of Workstep, including a garden centre and landscape business. Shaw Project is a voluntary organisation covering the whole of the north east region and does not fall within any city/county council remit.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Arms Sales (Indonesia)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the Export Credits Guarantee Department was informed of the decision by Alvis to use *(a)* PT Truba, *(b)* PTSK and *(c)* Global Select as agents in connection with the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia. [214151]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 4 February 2005]:* Although ECGD was aware that Alvis had employed at least one agent in relation to the sale of Scorpion and Stormer vehicles to Indonesia, the exporter was not obliged under the application procedure to disclose anything in relation to any agency arrangement other than the value of the commissions payable.

Biomass Power Plants

Mr. Page: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many working biomass power plants have been built since 1997. [215516]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: Working biomass power plants commissioned in the UK since 1997 are as follows.

Project	*KW installed capacity*	*Developer*	*Date of commissioning*
Elean Business Park*	36,850	EPR Ely Ltd.	2000
Goosey Lodge Power Plant	5,000	Wykes Engineering Company (Rushden) Ltd.	2000
Peabody Trust, BEDZED	239	Peabody Trust	2002
PDM Group Widnes	2,100	PDM Group Ltd.	2000
Thetford Power Station	41,500	Fibrothetford Ltd. C/o Thetford Power Station	1998
Thornton Power Station	9,000	TPS (UK) Ltd.	2002
The Westfield Biomass Plant	12,500	The Westfield Biomass Plant/EPR Scotland Ltd.	2000
Balcas Sawmill, Laragh, Enniskillen, NI	2,700	Balcas Ltd.	2005
SA Cumnock WWTW*	177	Scottish Water	1999
Fawley Waste to Energy Plant*	8,600	Shanks Chemical Services Ltd.	2001
Weston Industrial Estate*	500	Network Energy Ltd.	2002
Total = 11	119,166		

Note:

This listing does not include co-firing installations, but those plants marked * have an element of co-firing.

Business Start-ups (Warrington)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new business start-ups there have been in Warrington in each year since 1997. [214964]

Nigel Griffiths: Barclays data show that there were 1,700 business start-ups in Warrington Unitary Authority in 2003 and a further 1,500 in the first nine months of 2004. This represents a 15 per cent. increase on the first nine months of 2003. Business start-up data for unitary authorities are not available for before 2003.

Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation includes non-VAT registered firms and shows that there were business 445,000 (revised) start-ups in England and Wales in 2003, a 16 per cent. increase on the year before. A further 396,000 businesses started up in England and Wales in the first nine months of 2004. This represents an increase of 14 per cent. on the first nine months of 2003.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations and de-registrations for Warrington unitary authority are shown as follows for 1997 and 2003. Data for 2004 will be available in autumn 2005.

Warrington unitary authority

	VAT registrations
1997	565
1998	590
1999	480
2000	515
2001	585
2002	575
2003	600

Source:

Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2003, Small Business Service, available from the Library of the House and also at: http://www.sbs.gov.uk/analytical/statistics/vatstats.php

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold, which has risen in each year since 1997. Only 1.8 million out of 4 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2003.

Charities (Employment Tribunals)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many volunteers have claimed *(a)* unfair dismissal, *(b)* sex discrimination, *(c)* race discrimination and *(d)* disability discrimination against charities at employment tribunals in the last 12 months; and what the average cost awarded in each category was. [214215]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Employment Tribunals Service does not keep statistics on particular types of claimants and respondents. However, volunteers are not currently protected as employees and would be able to bring a claim before the Employment Tribunal only if they could show that they were in or applying for employment.

Debt Recovery

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will break down the Export Credits Guarantee Department unrecovered debt from each country on guarantees issued since May 1991 by project. [208424]

Mr. Alexander *[holding answer 17 January 2005]*: Details of amounts owed to the Paris Club are not held at project level. Information on unrecovered claims, on a market basis, is included in the table:

Market	*Unrecovered claims (£)*
Algeria	29,061,027.93
Australia	8,577,275.61
Belgium	23,616,042.47
Brazil	2,360,561.00
Canada	20,109,035.48
Colombia	1,519,289.47
Cote D'Ivoire	13,775,958.77
Dominica	1,809,022.43
Egypt	198,773.94
Ghana	58,726,117.49
Indonesia	636,563,315.97
Kuwait	48,257.35
Mexico	1,272,839.45
Pakistan	6,734,135.32
Paraguay	17,430.03
Seychelles	1,139,513.57
Switzerland	29,112,667.75
Turkey	1,583,098.57
Zimbabwe	90,257,122.92

Note:

As at 31 December 2004.

Departmental Policies (Clwyd, South)

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people in the Clwyd South constituency have benefited from the national minimum wage since its introduction. [210323]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Figures for the Clwyd South constituency are not available due to small sample size.

The latest low pay data from the ONS show that 1.1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the October 2004 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. Around 1 million people in the UK stood to benefit from the introduction of the National Minimum Wage in April 1999.

The DTI will provide estimates of National Minimum Wage beneficiaries by region as soon as possible. These figures will be made available in the House of Commons Library.

Enterprise Capital Funds

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications have been received to date from potential operators of the pathfinder round of Enterprise Capital Funds; and when the deadline is for applications. [213205]

Nigel Griffiths: The Government intend to launch a bidding process for a pathfinder round of Enterprise Capital Funds within weeks of receiving state aid approval for the scheme from the European Commission. Until then no applications from potential operators can be made.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated *(a)* administration and *(b)* programme costs of the Enterprise Capital Funds are in each year between 2004 and 2008. [213206]

Nigel Griffiths: The estimated costs for running the Enterprise Capital Funds are:

£ million

	Aministration[1]	*Programme*[2]
2004–05	0.138	0.157
2005–06	0.227	33.3
2006–07	0.227	68.05
2007–08	0.227	83

[1] Figures for 2004–05 are actual figures, those for 2005–06 onwards are based on estimates of staff deployment.

[2] These are estimated figures and may vary depending on a number of factors, including the types of ECF selected during the bidding process.

Note:

The launch of the ECF programme remains dependent on EU state aid clearance.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the fund limit of the Enterprise Capital Funds is; and what criteria were used in setting the limit at this level. [213207]

Nigel Griffiths: Subject to approval from the European Union State aid authorities the Government intends that Enterprise Capital Funds (ECFs) will be able to raise a maximum of £25 million of government leverage alongside private investor's funds. The ECFs will be set an initial investment limit of £2 million into any one SMB. These limits were set following a full open consultation with potential investors, fund managers and business. The Government response to the consultation is set out in "Bridging the Finance Gap: next steps in improving access to growth capital for small business" (SBS and HM Treasury 2003). Key criteria were the availability of existing sources of finance and the needs of SMEs to obtain appropriate finance.

Enterprise Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the *(a)* programme and *(b)* administrative costs of the Enterprise Fund were in each year between 2001to 2004. [214192]

Nigel Griffiths: The programme and administrative costs associated for the Enterprise Fund for the years 2001 to 2004 are as follows:

£ million

	Programme costs	*Administrative costs*
2001–02	39.2	n/a
2002–03	74.7	1.5
2003–04	83.759	1.6

The cost of administration in 2001–02 can only be identified at disproportionate cost.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Coordinating Committee on Fusion Energy EC-USA met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214740]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: No meetings of the EU Coordinating Committee on Fusion Energy EC-USA took place during the Italian and Irish Presidencies. A meeting took place during the Dutch Presidency on 2 November 2004, in Vilamoura, Portugal. The European Commission represents the EU in these meetings and no Member State Government experts were present including the UK.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Advisory Committee for the implementation of the general framework for Community activities in favour of consumers met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214741]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Details of the Advisory Committee for Community actions in support of consumer policy meetings held during the Italian, Irish and Dutch Presidency of the EU are given as follows. The DTIs Consumer and Competition Directorate represents the UK at these meetings.

Presidency	*Dates*	*The Advisory Committee for community action in support of consumer policy meetings*	*Location*
Italian	July—December 2003	18 November, 2003	Brussels
Irish	January—June 2004	14 June, 2004	Brussels
Dutch	July—December 2004	13 October, 2004	Brussels

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch Presidency of the EU the Committee for implementation of multiannual framework programme for actions in the rational end efficient use of energy resources met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [214781]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The work of the committee which the hon. Member refers to has, since 2003, been undertaken by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme committee.

This committee met on the following dates in Brussels:

24 July 2003[1]

8 October 2003

5–6 February 2004

15 September 2004

8 December 2004

[1] Informal

The meetings were attended by a DTI and a Defra official.

MG Rover

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the Government's role in partnership agreement negotiations between MG Rover and the Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation. [213395]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 3 February 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has previously made it clear in the House that the Government fully support the joint venture between MG Rover and SAIC, and hope that the negotiations are successfully concluded as soon as possible.

Ministers have recently met with senior executives from both MG Rover, SAIC and the Chinese Government, and stressed this support.

Gas

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much *(a)* associated gas and *(b)* non-associated gas has been (i) flared and (ii) vented (A) offshore and (B) onshore in each year for which figures are available; and what percentages of total (1) associated gas and (2) non-associated gas production this represented in each year. [215586]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The following tables show annual UK offshore and onshore associated and dry (non-associated) gas production, and the percentages and amounts of gas vented and flared since 1979, the earliest date that combined records for seaward and landward flaring and venting have been kept.

Table 1: Showing (by year since 1979)—Offshore gas production flaring and venting

Thousand cubic metres (Ksm^3)

	Associated gas production Ksm^3	*Gas flared Ksm^3*	*Associated gas flare as percentage of associated gas production*	*Gas vented Ksm^3*	*Associated gas vent as percentage of associated gas production*
1979	7,207,480	6,528,344	90.58	0	0.00
1980	7,245,871	4,580,540	63.22	0	0.00
1981	10,334,941	4,238,218	41.01	0	0.00
1982	13,935,654	4,017,198	28.83	0	0.00
1983	16,346,156	3,734,138	22.84	19,985	0.12
1984	21,925,657	3,399,136	15.50	329,176	1.50
1985	24,327,363	2,677,625	11.01	338,428	1.39
1986	25,865,305	2,155,514	8.33	379,269	1.47
1987	27,935,387	2,256,414	8.08	339,341	1.21
1988	32,180,666	2,335,759	7.26	312,769	0.97
1989	30,906,713	2,485,698	8.04	185,187	0.60
1990	28,888,023	2,732,865	9.46	97,453	0.34
1991	31,221,148	2,476,022	7.93	56,641	0.18
1992	35,924277	2,438,222	6.79	69,807	0.19
1993	40,863,083	2,479,598	6.07	65,274	0.16
1994	51,049,012	3,156,534	6.18	56,383	0.11
1995	55,508,296	5,805,151	10.46	33,257	0.06
1996	59,718,242	2,513,065	4.21	24,434	0.04
1997	60,580,328	2,205,676	3.64	35,554	0.06
1998	68,388,042	2,137,428	3.13	40,792	0.06
1999	77,044,484	2,189,774	2.84	270,815	0.35
2000	76,489,996	1,858,075	2.43	123,475	0.16
2001	77,820,312	1,737,953	2.23	76,332	0.10
2002	81,664,017	1,609,620	1.97	78,612	0.10
2003	77,188,639	1,488,068	1.93	133,335	0.17
2004	70,004,711	1,503,565	2.15	30,504	0.04

Thousand cubic metres (Ksm^3)

	Dry gas production Ksm^3	*Gas flared Ksm^3*	*Dry gas flare as percentage of dry gas production*	*Gas vented Ksm^3*	*Dry gas vent as percentage of dry gas production*
1979	0	0	—	0	—
1980	0	0	—	0	—
1981	0	0	—	0	—
1982	0	0	—	0	—
1983	13,272,437	409	0.00	0	0.00
1984	31,590,534	1,154	0.00	0	0.00
1985	27,113,729	2,645	0.01	0	0.00
1986	35,731,870	3,904	0.01	316	0.00
1987	45,190,900	5,348	0.01	699	0.00
1988	24,606,205	13,749	0.06	3,508	0.01
1989	22,635,957	10,563	0.05	1,042	0.00
1990	36,061,609	6,971	0.02	5,025	0.01
1991	41,193,035	6,527	0.02	13,151	0.03
1992	39,582,866	1,318	0.00	17,171	0.04
1993	41,357,994	950	0.00	8,491	0.02
1994	36,421,239	3,501	0.01	12,615	0.03
1995	43,432,286	23,571	0.05	15,058	0.03
1996	54,752,478	40,564	0.07	12,190	0.02
1997	57,264,114	34,720	0.06	10,989	0.02
1998	54,538,890	31,095	0.06	12,616	0.02
1999	53,863,045	54,099	0.10	118,020	0.22
2000	63,276,387	5,562	0.01	5,428	0.01
2001	60,223,440	7,962	0.01	5,208	0.01
2002	50,508,230	10,520	0.02	4,568	0.01
2003	52,104,164	7,582	0.01	3,472	0.01
2004	47,058,723	72,491	0.15	3,022	0.01

Table 2: Showing (by year since 1979)—Onshore gas production flaring and venting

Thousand cubic metres (Ksm^3)

	Associated gas production Ksm^3	*Gas flared Ksm^3*	*Associated gas flare as percentage of associated gas production*	*Gas vented Ksm^3*	*Associated gas vent as percentage of associated gas production*
1979	1,595	1,595	100.00	0	0.00
1980	7,848	7,570	96.46	0	0.00
1981	5,888	1,933	32.83	0	0.00
1982	7,257	1,432	19.73	0	0.00
1983	10,197	3,634	35.64	0	0.00
1984	11,053	5,363	48.52	0	0.00
1985	15,817	9,134	57.75	0	0.00
1986	37,165	18,418	49.56	0	0.00
1987	59,709	19,230	32.21	65	0.11
1988	75,047	21,636	28.83	301	0.40
1989	87,203	18,141	20.80	1,313	1.51
1990	158,580	80,943	51.04	2,140	1.35
1991	311,038	41,749	13.42	16,696	5.37
1992	347,107	29,049	8.37	12,513	3.60
1993	343,413	39,957	11.64	13,174	3.84
1994	409,066	38,210	9.34	11,421	2.79
1995	452,801	36,896	8.15	16,842	3.72
1996	408,847	48,477	11.86	14,526	3.55
1997	398,918	30,613	7.67	14,808	3.71
1998	410,141	27,199	6.63	23,423	5.71
1999	357,094	24,525	6.87	26,470	7.41
2000	264,071	20,912	7.92	10,078	3.82
2001	239,680	15,944	6.65	545	0.23
2002	243,339	19,625	8.06	526	0.22
2003	202,182	25,024	12.38	845	0.42
2004	158,245	21,770	13.76	467	0.30

Thousand cubic metres (Ksm^3)

	Dry gas production Ksm^3	*Gas flared Ksm^3*	*Dry gas flare as percentage of dry gas production*	*Gas vented Ksm^3*	*Dry gas vent as percentage of dry gas production*
1979	0	0	—	0	—
1980	0	0	—	0	—
1981	0	0	—	0	—
1982	A	0	—	0	—
1983	0	0	—	0	—
1984	0	0	—	0	—
1985	0	0	—	0	—
1986	0	0	—	0	—
1987	420	0	0.00	0	0.00
1988	3,948	0	0.00	0	0.00
1989	3,923	0	0.00	200	5.10
1990	3,265	0	0.00	126	3.86
1991	2,964	0	0.00	0	0.00
1992	10,826	524	4.84	0	0.00
1993	63,547	49	0.08	0	0.00
1994	41,761	37	0.09	0	0.00
1995	39,506	41	0.10	0	0.00
1996	60,579	61	0.10	0	0.00
1997	97,425	0	0.00	28	0.03
1998	123,098	6	0.00	369	0.30
1999	132,706	0	0.00	376	0.28
2000	526,409	101	0.02	377	0.07
2001	475,963	227	0.05	80	0.02
2002	355,701	1,382	0.39	0	0.00
2003	417,530	310	0.07	0	0.00
2004	292,285	384	0.13	0	0.00

Miners' Compensation

Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress is being made with including coal preparation plant-workers in the health claims compensation scheme. [214589]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department's medical advice is that the levels of respirable dust (not visible dust) in surface jobs, such as coal preparation plant-workers, were not sufficient to cause lung disease. The miners' solicitors had been intending to contest this in new litigation but advised the court in December 2004 that they were not now going ahead with this.

Any surface-only worker who feels they have a claim can pursue this in the normal way as a common law case and should consult their solicitor.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miner compensation claims have been submitted so far in 2005 by *(a)* AJ Revill Associates, *(b)* Thorn Legal Services Ltd., *(c)* Union and General Services Ltd., *(d)* Daton Holdings Ltd. and *(e)* Thorn Compensation Services Ltd. [211831]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 31 January 2005]*: The companies have not registered any miner's compensation claims. The Department's claim handlers have no knowledge of these companies.

It should also be noted that the cut-off date for registering claims under the respiratory disease scheme was 31 March 2004.

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average level of compensation paid to opencast miners at Longannet was; and what the average level of compensation paid to opencast miners in England following closures was. [215356]

Nigel Griffiths: The Department's claim handlers do not keep statistics based on the type of mining technique at collieries.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 20 solicitors have received most in fees paid by the Department under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme; and how much each has been paid to date. [120893]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 26 January 2005]*: As of 24 January 2005 the figures are:

Solicitor[1]	*Total solicitors costs*[2] *(£ million)*
Thompsons	61.6
Hugh James Ford Simey	52.3
Raleys Solicitors	42.2
Browell Smith & Co.	29.7
Mark Gilbert Morse	25.0
Beresfords Solicitors	23.0
Union of Democratic Mineworkers	18.0
Graysons	17.1
Watson Burton	15.3
Towells Solicitors	11.9
Moss Solicitors	9.9
Irwin Mitchell	9.6
Randell Lloyd Jenkins & Martin	7.9
Corries	6.4
Kidd & Spoor Harper Solicitors	6.3
The Legal Warehouse	6.2
O H Parsons	6.2
AMS Law	6.2
Wake Smith	4.9
Atteys	4.9

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[1] "Top 20" solicitors are in descending order based on total solicitors costs paid on both COPD and VWF.

[2] Solicitor's costs include VAT on solicitor's profit costs and disbursements, but exclude generic costs paid to solicitors involved in the setting up of the scheme and overview of its operation.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average settlement is for *(a)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(b)* vibration white finger claims for the 20 solicitors who have submitted the greatest number of claims under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme. [120897]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 26 January 2005]*: The information is as follows:

£

Solicitor[1]	*COPD average settlement*[2]	*VWF average settlement*[2]
Beresfords Solicitors	2,366	7,549
Thompsons	10,145	10,052
Hugh James Ford Simey	10,241	8,294
Raleys Solicitors	8,864	8,126
Browell Smith & Co.	9,985	8,907
Union of Democratic Mineworkers	4,213	8,490
Avalon	3,071	6,291
Mark Gilbert Morse	6,268	6,530
Graysons	4,877	7,408
Watson Burton	5,291	9,443
Corries	3,068	7,910
Moss Solicitors	4,953	7,867
AMS Law	3,846	8,371
Barber & Co.	2,839	—
Randell Lloyd Jenkins & Martin	8,000	8,699
Towells Solicitors	8,638	8,738
Irwin Mitchell	10,443	9,261
Kidd & Spoor Harper Solicitors	3,904	10,103
Delta Legal	3,646	5,551
The Legal Warehouse	3,306	6,286

[1] "Top 20" solicitors are in descending order and based on the number of claims received for both COPD and VWF combined. Claim receipts are those claims that are fully registered, i.e. exclude pool of claims accepted with minimum data, awaiting further information.

[2] Average settlement value is derived from total damages paid on claims settled by payment.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 20 solicitors have the largest number of unsettled *(a)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(b)* vibration white finger claims under the Coalminers' Compensation Scheme. [120898]

Nigel Griffiths *[holding answer 26 January 2005]*: As of 24 January 2005 the figures are:

Solicitors	*Total claims unsettled*
COPD	
Beresfords	67,585
Thompsons	35,118
Hugh James	34,769
Raleys	29,619
Avalon	24,915
Browell Smith & Co.	21,965
Mark Gilbert Morse	14,086
Barber & Co.	11,874
Corries	10,269
UDM	9,511
Delta Legal	8,718
Watson Burton	8,353
Randell Lloyd Jenkins & Martin	6,714
AMS Law	6,697
Graysons	6,658
Birchall Blackburn	6,621
Ingrams	5,758
The Legal Warehouse	5,371
BRM	5,214
German Hamilton	4,973
VWF	
Thompsons	12,488
Graysons	6,502
Beresfords	5,554
Browell Smith & Co.	4,571
Raleys	4,196
Hugh James	3,691
UDM	3,311
Watson Burton	3,145
Moss	2,416
Towells	2,357
AMS Law	2,053
Corries	1,615
Shaw & Co.	1,417
Kidd & Spoor Harper	1,315
Atteys	1,265
Irwin Mitchell	1,080
Latham & Co.	1,032
Randell Lloyd Jenkins & Martin	859
O H Parsons	824
Morisons	629

Note:

Unsettled claims include chronic bronchitis only claims where an interim payment has been made but has not (as yet) been accepted/paid as final settlement.

National Minimum Wage

Mr. David Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to reduce the qualifying age for the higher rate of the national minimum wage from 22 years to 21 years; and if she will make a statement. [215392]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We expect to receive the next report from the Low Pay Commission by the end of this month, and will consider any recommendations on this point very carefully.

Natural Gas Imports

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the volume and value of liquefied natural gas imported to the UK was in 2004. [214519]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: There were no significant imports of liquefied natural gas into the UK in 2004.

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans she has to review the gas storage capabilities of the UK at the point when the UK becomes a net importer of gas. [214520]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: According to the latest available data, the UK made the transition to being a net importer of gas in 2004.

Information on recent market movements suggests that the currently available storage has been sufficient to date over the course of the current winter and that stocks remain relatively high.

As outlined in the regular report published by the Joint Energy Security of Supply Working Group (JESS), there are a number of new gas storage projects due to come on stream over the next few years.

The latest update of the JESS report is available on the following weblink: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/jess/reports.shtml

Mr. David Stewart: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the monthly *(a)* volume and *(b)* value of gas (i) exported from and (ii) imported to the UK was in 2004. [214521]

Mr. Mike O'Brien *[holding answer 7 February 2005]*: The DTI publish monthly data on volumes of natural gas imports and exports. These are given as follows in terawatt hours.

Terawatt hours

2004	*Imports TWh*	*Exports TWh*
January	17.7	4.4
February	16.3	4.4
March	13.8	6.1
April	6.7	11.7
May	7.1	16.[illegible]
June	3.7	18.2
July	6.6	20.0
August	6.2	12.7
September	6.0	5.0
October	12.3	5.3
November	17.2	5.0
December	19.5	4.7

Statistics on the value of trade are collected by HM Customs and Excise and published in the Overseas Trade Statistics which is available in the House of Commons Library.

Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the activity of the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market in the UK in the past 12 months; and if she will list their publications and newsletters published over that period. [215233]

Mr. Alexander: The Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market have undertaken activities in the UK such as: speaking at conferences, seminars and courses; participating in Designs Fairs; collaborating with Intellectual Property Enforcement Agencies; and working with the UK Patent Office and other national offices to promote best practice.

In the same period the Office has published a large number of documents which include: its Annual Report; The Community Trade Marks Bulletin; The Community Designs Bulletin; and The Official Journal of the Office. A complete list of its publications has been placed in the Library of the House.

Post Offices

Annabelle Ewing: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 1 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 800W, on rural post offices, how many of the 1,500 additional post offices brought under the protected rural category as a result of the adoption and implementation of the under-definition are located in Scotland. [215318]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Post Office Ltd. (POL) did not differentiate between urban and rural branches before adopting the Countryside Agency definition of settlements with less than 10,000 inhabitants. POL cannot, therefore, provide a figure for the number of post offices in Scotland captured as a result of the adoption of that definition.

The number of rural post offices in Scotland is currently 1,157.

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many post offices have closed in the Greater London area in each of the last five years. [215166]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Data for Greater London are available from March 2000. The net closure figures for the London region are:

	Number
2001[1]	10
2002[1]	16
2003[1]	[2]44
2004[1]	[3]155
2004–05[5]	[4]87

[1] Year to end March.

[2] Including 11 under the urban reinvention programme.

[3] Including 142 under the urban reinvention programme.

[4] Including 75 under the urban reinvention programme.

[5] First half.

Pregnant Women (Discrimination)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to prevent discrimination against *(a)* pregnant women and *(b)* new mothers. [215472]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Pregnant women and new mothers are protected from discrimination and other unfair treatment at work under the Sex Discrimination Act and the Employment Rights Act. Employers who discriminate against pregnant women are breaking the law and could be liable to pay compensation.

The Government are concerned, however, that the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) current investigation into pregnancy discrimination in the workplace has found that some women still experience problems. The Government look forward to receiving the EOC's final report and recommendations later this year and will consider them carefully.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to give pregnant working women greater knowledge of their *(a)* maternity rights and *(b)* employer's responsibilities. [215473]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government look forward to the final report of the Equal Opportunities Commission's (EOC) investigation into pregnancy discrimination in the workplace. We have noted their interim recommendations which focus on improving awareness of the law and promoting increased dialogue between employers and employees before, during and after maternity leave.

The Government provide a range of guidance for employers and employees. Additionally, free confidential advice is available from ACAS and the EOC.

Trade Associations

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether it is her policy to invite trade associations to play a greater role in training and the provision of apprenticeships. [206981]

Jacqui Smith: The network of employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) already include representatives of trade associations which contribute to the identification and implementation of skills needs and priorities. One of the roles of the SSCs is to develop apprenticeship frameworks and many trade associations already play a very active role in this regard.

UK Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if she will make a statement on the UK Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary IT programme. [214292]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: The UK Atomic Energy Authority Constabulary IT programme has recently been focussing its efforts on the preparation for stand alone status as the Civil Nuclear Constabulary, and the implementation of the Airwave communication system.

Vehicle Pricing

Mr. Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment she has made of the difference in the purchase costs of new vehicles between the UK and *(a)* other European countries and *(b)* the USA. [211899]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In July 2004 my Department published "DTI Economic Paper No.9: The Benefits from Competition: Some illustrative examples", available at:

www.dti.gov.uk/economics/economics_paper9.pdf.

The paper included an assessment of the effects of action by the competition authorities and changes in the competition regime on new car prices in the UK. In so doing the Report made reference to the reports of the European Commission on price differentials within the European Union, the latest of which was published on 29 July 2004 (www.europa.eu.int/comm/competition/car_sector/price_diffs/).

The DTI paper reported that new car prices in the UK had reduced, on average, by about 10 per cent. between April 2000 and October 2003 and that the European Commission research shows evidence that the disparity between new car prices in the UK and the rest of the Union had decreased.

My Department has made no assessment of the difference in the purchase costs of new vehicles between the UK and the USA.

Wind Power

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research projects she is supporting in wind power generation. [213670]

Mr. Mike O'Brien: DTI grants have been paid to a number of projects at present supporting wind power with its contribution totalling some £3,472, 210.

Wind Power Generation

		£
AMEC Services Ltd.	Offshore wind turbine and bird activity at Blyth	136,240
Garrad Hassan and Partners Ltd.	UK contribution to concerted action on Offshore Wind Partners Ltd. Energy Deployment—phase 2	74,030
NEG Micon Rotors Ltd.	Large multi-part offshore blade development	495,000
NEG Micon Rotors Ltd.	Review of control algorithms for offshore wind turbines	47,955
Garrad Hassan and Partners Ltd.	Finite element modelling of offshore wind turbine support structures	22,180
Insensys Ltd.	Improved performance of wind turbines using fibre optic structural monitoring	139,970
QinetiQ	Design and manufacture of radar absorbent wind turbine blades	112,600
Euro-Projects (LTTC) Ltd.	Opportunities for reinforced thermoplastic composites in offshore wind structures	48,500
NEG Micon Rotors Ltd.	Fully integrated resin distribution system	225,000
Hayes McKenzie Partnership	Microseismic and infrasound monitoring of low frequency, noise and vibration from wind farms	25,045
Seacore Ltd.	Offshore wind farms proposal to reduce costs of foundations and installation	999,912
SEtech(Geotechnical Foundations Engineers) Ltd.	FINPILE—improving the lateral stability of monopile foundations	49,178
Scott Wilson Oceans	Innovative foundation designs for offshore wind turbines	39,800
SLP Engineering Ltd.	The application of suction caisson foundations to offshore wind turbine	917,000
Caley Ocean Systems Ltd.	Boat access system prototype—offshore wind turbines	68,300
Hovemere Ltd.	Mobile wind lidar for offshore wind farms	71,500

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Brixton Prison

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on employer's liability insurance cover for prison education staff at HMP Brixton; and what measures are taken to ensure that Reed Education adheres to employment law. [214995]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has not received any representations concerning this matter. Officials at the Department for Education and Skills investigated an allegation that employer's liability insurance for prison education staff at HMP Brixton had expired on 1 December 2004. It transpired that this was not the case and that during the period of 1 December 2004 to 30 November 2005, the education staff at HMP Brixton were covered by employer's liability insurance.

HMPS ensure that contractors take out liability insurance of £5 million. HMP Brixton's contract with Reed Learning states that,

> "The contractor shall hold employer's liability insurance in respect of relevant staff in accordance with a legal requirement for the time being in force."

Consultants

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total expenditure by her Department on external consultants was in *(a)* 1996–97 and *(b)* 2003–04; and what the estimated cost of employing external consultants will be in (i) 2004–05, (ii) 2005–06, (iii) 2006–07 and (iv) 2007–08. [211673]

Derek Twigg: Within the Department for Education and Skills the total cost of consultants charged to administration budgets was £8.216 million in 1996–97 and £4.7 million in 2003–04. The cost charged to programmes is not recorded centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

To provide estimated costs for consultants for 2004–05, 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 would require a departmental trawl at disproportionate cost.

Contract Awards

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many contracts in her Department have been granted to *(a)* EDS, *(b)* Fujitsu and *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly in each of the last two years; whether they were open to competition; for what they were granted; for how much, and over what period of time; and if she will make a statement. [211609]

Derek Twigg: During the last two years (2003, 2004) the Department for Education and Skills has not awarded any contracts to *(a)* EDS or *(c)* EDS and Fujitsu jointly.

One contract was awarded to *(b)* Fujitsu to undertake the proof of concept of the Cybrarian Project. The objective of this project was to assist in decreasing the digital divide by facilitating access to the internet and to learning opportunities for those who currently do not, or cannot, use the internet because of lack of skills or confidence or because of physical or cognitive disabilities. Fujitsu was awarded a £465,000 contract, following an Office of Government Commerce S-Cat exercise, to develop and produce demonstrator systems and tests. The exercise was completed by Fujitsu in autumn 2003.

School Leavers (Easington)

Mr. Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school-leavers in the Easington constituency went on to *(a)* higher education, *(b)* further education and *(c)* full-time employment in each year since 2001. [214927]

Dr. Howells: Information on 18-year-olds entering HE is collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and is available at constituency level. The number of 18-year-olds entering HE from Easington constituency for each year since 2001 is given in Table 1. The numbers have been rounded to the nearest five.

Table 1: The number of 18-year-olds entering HE from Easington constituency since 2001

End of calendar year	*Number of people*
2001	125
2002	155
2003	120

Estimates of the percentage of 16-year-olds participating in education and LSC funded work based learning (WBL) are not available below local education authority (LEAs) level. The number of 16-year-olds participating in full-time education for end 2001 (2001/02 academic year) in Durham LEA was 4,200 (rounded to the nearest hundred) or 66 per cent. of the age group. The number of these young people participating in education and WBL was 5,500 or 87 per cent. Estimates for end 2002 and end 2003 (provisional) are due to be published in March 2005.

Information on 16 to 19-year-olds in employment (both full- and part-time) is available at parliamentary constituency level from the Office for National Statistics. Table 2 shows the numbers and percentages in Easington constituency since 2001. However, sample sizes are very small due to the narrow age band and small geographic area. Therefore, the employment rate is volatile and care should be taken when interpreting the figures. The numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand, with the rates calculated from unrounded numbers.

Table 2: Percentage of 16 to 19-year-olds in employment in Easington constituency

	Number	*Percentage*
2001–02	4,000	73.1
2002–03	3,000	49.0
2003–04	[1]n/a	[1]n/a

[1] The employment rate for 2003–04 is not available as it would be "disclosive", as it is based on a sample of less than 3.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times during the *(a)* Italian, *(b)* Irish and *(c)* Dutch presidency of the EU the Co-ordination Group to promote uniformity of application of the general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas (first general system) met; when and where these meetings took place; what UK Government expert was present; and if she will make a statement. [215923]

Dr. Howells: No meetings of the Co-ordination Group were held during the Italian and Dutch presidencies. A meeting was held during the Irish presidency on 24 April 2004, in Brussels, and the UK National Coordinator responsible for the general system was present.

Further Education Funding

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent *(a)* per school sixth former and *(b)* per student in a college of further education in (i) England and (ii) Buckinghamshire in each year since the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council. [215741]

Dr. Howells: The Department allocates funds for education and training in the post-16 learning and skills sector to the Learning and Skills Council. The Department does not collect information on the level of per capita funding for students in school sixth-forms and further education colleges at either the local or national level. Mark Haysom, the Learning and Skills Council's chief executive will write to the hon. Member with details of the level of per capita funding for students in *(a)* school sixth- forms and *(b)* further education colleges in England and Buckinghamshire for each year since the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council.

Higher Education

Mr. Hurst: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils entered higher education from schools and colleges in *(a)* the County of Essex in each year from 1991 to 1997 and *(b)* the County of Essex and the boroughs of Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea in each year from 1998 to 2004. [215116]

Dr. Howells: The available information is taken from the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) and covers 18-year-old applicants accepted through UCAS to full-time first degree and HMD courses: Figures for Essex, Thurrock and Southend-on-Sea LEAs are given in the table. Figures for years prior to 1994 are not held centrally and data for 2004 will not be available until late February 2005.

18-year-olds, domiciled in Essex LEA, accepted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service to full-time first degree and HND courses in the UK, 1994 to 1997

Year of entry	*Essex*
1994	3,137
1995	3,337
1996	3,445
1997	3,805

Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

18-year-olds, domiciled in Essex, Thurrock or Southend-on-Sea LEAs, accepted through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service to full-time first degree and HND courses in the UK, 1998 to 2003

Year of entry	*Essex*	*Thurrock*	*Southend-on-Sea*
1998	3,285	320	171
1999	3,354	318	163
2000	3,241	346	168
2001	3,483	350	168
2002	3,584	355	184
2003	3,672	395	188

Source:
Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of school leavers in *(a)* Greater London and *(b)* each London borough have gone on to higher education in each year since 1997. [214555]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Southwark, North and Bermondsey (Simon Hughes) on 4 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1806W, which gave the latest available figures up to 2003. Data for 2004 will not be available until February 2005.

* **Mr. Andrew Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many undergraduate students were pursuing courses in higher education institutions on the last date for which information is available; and of those how many qualified *(a)* as home students by virtue of being settled in the UK for reasons other than education, *(b)* as nationals or children of nationals of member states of the EU, ordinarily resident in that country, *(c)* as EU originating migrant workers or family members thereof, *(d)* as an exchange student, *(e)* as a refugee or the spouse or child thereof, *(f)* as a person with exceptional leave to remain in the UK or the spouse or child thereof and *(g)* as a citizen of Hong Kong; how many were overseas students; and what proportion each represented of total undergraduates. [214808]

Dr. Howells: The latest available information is shown in the table. Migrant workers, refugees and those with exceptional leave to remain cannot be identified from the existing data.

Undergraduates in UK HE institutions 2003–04

	Number	*Percentage*
Total undergraduates	1,674,905	100.0
Of which:		
UK domicile	1,523,740	91.0
EU	56,715	3.4
Hong Kong	7,435	0.4
Other overseas	87,015	5.2
Exchange students	17,945	1.1

Note:
Figures based on census count of students as at 31 December .2004
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency.

Ms Dari Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many entrants to higher education were from educational establishments in the Stockton, South constituency in each of the last seven years. [215310]

Dr. Howells: The available information is taken from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Information on the parliamentary constituency domicile of a student is derived from the students' postcode.

18-year-old undergraduate entrants to UK HE institutions from Stockton, South constituency, 1997/98 to 2003/04

Academic year	*Entrants*
1997/98[1]	305
1998/99	345
1999/2000	330
2000/01	345
2001/02	335

18-year-old undergraduate entrants to UK HE institutions from Stockton, South constituency, 1997/98 to 2003/04

Academic year	*Entrants*
2002/03	375
2003/04	365

[1] Figures for 1997/98 do not include entrants at the Open University as these can not be identified on the dataset.
Figures are based upon a snapshot as at 1 December for 18-year-olds who have a known postcode. In each year, around 2–3 per cent. of UK domiciled students did not have sufficient postcode information to allow them to be allocated to a constituency.
Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) Student Record

In-house Magazines

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on the production of in-house magazines in the Department and its predecessors in each year since 1997. [213640]

Derek Twigg: Expenditure on the production of in-house publications within my Department is set out as follows.

It is not possible, except at disproportionate cost, to separately identify spend on internal publications prior to April 1999.

£000

	Spend on internal publications
1999–2000	67.9
2000–01	89.8
2001–02	83.7
2002–03	95.1
2003–04	95.0
2004–05	80.7

Financial information for financial year 2004–05, reflects current expenditure (at 1 February 2005).

Prisoners (Internet Access)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which European countries her Department consulted on how they provided internet access to prisoners during the planning of the strategy produced by Graham Connellan; [214992]

(2) what the outcome was of the work conducted by Graham Connellan on providing internet access to prisoners; and if she will place a copy of the strategy in the Library. [214993]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Website research was undertaken into the French, German and Swedish Prison Services in preparation for working up the draft strategy.

Currently a pilot to validate the technical solution has been defined and agreed. It is planned to commence at HMP Leyhill in the near future. The eight week pilot is being managed by HM prisons headquarters. The pilot will consist of a suite of terminals with access to approximately 10 web sites. If the pilot is successful, it is anticipated that a full implementation project will be defined and delivered and the strategy for this will be made available in the public domain.

Queen's Flight

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) on how many occasions her Department's Ministers used the Queen's flight in each of the past five years; [213703]

(2) how much money her Department has spent on chartering aircraft in each of the past five years. [213713]

Derek Twigg: The publicly available Cabinet Office guidance, "Travel by Ministers", makes clear that special flights may be authorised when a scheduled service is not available, or when it is essential to travel by air, but the requirements of official or Parliamentary business or security considerations or urgency preclude the journey being made by a scheduled service.

Neither the Queen's flight service nor private charter flights have been used by any Ministers in the Department for Education and Skills, and its predecessor, for domestic travel in the past five years.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list published in 1999 covers the period 2 May 1997 to 31 March 1999. Where RAF/Private Charter aircraft are used this is shown in the list. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2004–05 will be published in due course.

All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

School Fires

Tom Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many fires there were in schools in England in each of the last three years; and how many she estimates were caused by arson. [215170]

Derek Twigg: Because the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has overall policy lead for fire safety and arson reduction across Government Departments, it is ODPM rather than this Department that compiles statistics on fires in schools.

The latest set of figures we have on school fires from ODPM cover the three years 2001–02 to 2003–04. The data for 2002–03 do not include estimates for the short periods of industrial action and the figures for 2003–04 are provisional. For England the details are:

		Most likely cause	
	Total	*Accidental*	*Deliberate*
2001–02	1,418	602	816
2002–03	1,294	562	733
2003–04	1,288	535	753

Student Finance

Mr. Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much Student Loan Company expenditure there has been on *(a)* grants, *(b)* income contingent loans, *(c)* tuition fees, *(d)* hardship and access to learning, *(e)* fee waiver and *(f)* opportunity bursaries in each year since 1999–2000 at (i) Northumbria and (ii) Newcastle universities. [215013]

Dr. Howells: Data on Student Loan Company (SLC) expenditure paid to students at Northumbria university and the university of Newcastle upon Tyne in respect of grants, income-contingent loan cash outlay, tuition fees and hardship loans for academic years1999/00 to 2004/05 (provisional) are shown in the following table.

SLC expenditure on grants[1, 2], income-contingent loan cash outlay[2], tuition fees[3], and hardship loans[3] paid to students studying at Northumbria university and the university of Newcastle upon Tyne[4]—Academic years 1999/00 to 2004/05 (provisional)

£000

	1999/00	*2000/01*	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*[5]
Northumbria:						
Grants	456	728	955	1,049	671	2,922
Loans	17,558	24,169	25,360	27,255	31,812	33,225
Fees	3,087	3,995	4,661	4,939	4,986	5,058
Hardship loans[6]	120	120	122	124	106	n/a
Total[7]	21,220	29,011	31,097	33,368	37,575	41,205
Newcastle:						
Grants	62	102	206	243	196	1,891
Loans	13,322	20,392	24,083	26,492	31,842	33,364
Fees	1,727	2,471	3,236	3,431	3,612	3,494
Hardship loans[6]	46	71	101	68	54	n/a
Total[7]	15,156	23,037	27,627	30,233	35,704	38,749

n/a = Not applicable

[1] Up to and including academic year 2003/04, data on grant expenditure for student support scheme students relates to additional allowances/grants available to eligible students for extra help depending on their circumstances, e.g. students with disabilities, students with dependents, single parent students, those incurring certain travel costs, and those who have recently left care. In addition, data for 2004/05 include expenditure on the Higher Education grant which was introduced for new students in 2004/05 to help cover the cost of participating in Higher Education.

[2] Students domiciled in England and Wales.

[3] Students domiciled in England, Wales and the EU.

[4] Data also includes planned expenditure.

[5] Provisional (as at 4 February 2005).

[6] Hardship loans have been discontinued in 2004/05 following the introduction of the Higher Education Grant.

[7] Totals may not add due to rounding.

The rise in SLC Grant expenditure in 2004/05 is due partly to the introduction of the Higher Education Grant which was introduced for new students in 2004/05 to help cover the cost of participating in Higher Education. It is also due to a change in accounting arrangements whereby prior to 2004/05, local education authorities were responsible for paying certain grants and allowances. In 2004/05, the SLC are responsible for paying all grants and allowances hence the increase in the SLC expenditure.

Hardship/Access to learning fund expenditure, fee waivers and opportunity bursaries are paid by HEFCE. Data on these expenditures are shown in the following table.

Hardship/Access to learning fund allocations, fee waivers and opportunity bursaries allocations: Northumbria university and the university of Newcastle upon Tyne—Academic years 1999/00 to 2004/05

£000

	1999/00	*2000/01*	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Northumbria:						
Hardship/access to learning fund	1,010	746	799	943	1,004	659
Fee waivers	n/a	52	47	48	58	12
Opportunity bursaries[1]	n/a	n/a	111	200	294	154
Total[2]	1,010	797	957	1,191	1,357	824
Newcastle:						
Hardship/access to learning fund	492	616	597	545	484	407
Fee waivers	n/a	2	7	12	14	5
Opportunity bursaries[1]	n/a	n/a	66	82	163	80
Total[2]	492	617	670	639	661	491

n/a = Not applicable

[1] There were no opportunity bursaries for new students in 2004/05 as the bursaries were replaced by the Higher Education Grants introduced for new students in 2004/05. Figures for 2004/05 relate to continuing bursary instalments only.

[2] Totals may not add due to rounding.

Schools' Income

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what information she collects on the income of individual schools. [215773]

Mr. Stephen Twigg: Ministers decided in 2002 that the Department should collect detailed information on income and expenditure in individual schools so that schools can compare themselves against other similar schools. The Consistent Financial Reporting (CFR) framework regulations came into force on 1 April 2003. The approved headings for the income fields are set out as follows. The Department has just finished collecting the second year's income data and loaded it onto the new benchmarking website www.teachernet.gov.uk/schoolfinance along with some contextual information about the schools. The website allows schools to identify similar schools, based on the contextual information, in order to compare income and expenditure.

Income Data

101 (Funds delegated by the local education authority)
102 (Funding for sixth form students)
103 (Special educational needs funding)
104 (Funding for minority ethnic pupils)
105 (Standards Fund)
106 (Other Government grants)
107 (Other grants)
108 (Income from facilities and services)
109 (Income from catering)
110 (Receipts from supply teacher insurance claims)
111 (Receipts from other insurance claims)
112 (Income from contributions to visits etc)
113 (Donations and/or private funds)